

The Third Book of the Chronicle

From Biblical Times to the Present

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Part ONE

CHAPTER 1

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. 3 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

4 It was a long time ago that King Cyrus let the Jewish people return to Jerusalem. 5 When King Darius ruled the Persian Empire and King Philip reigned over Macedonia, the High Priest Jaddus held office in Jerusalem. 6 At that stage Jerusalem and all of Judea enjoyed a brief reprieve and a certain degree of autonomy as a Persian province and temple district. 7 Meanwhile the Macedonian and Greek City States were subtly competing for supremacy. 8 As a newly rising power, the Macedonians were considered Barbarians by the other Greek cities, a fact which kept causing incessant discord and friction. 9 But before we chronicle those ancient events, we have to take a closer look at the past. 10 Mysterious and imperceptible are God's ways! 11 But only to those who ignore the signs of the times and therefore don't recognize them and to those who haven't experienced God's love or accepted it. 12 God's ways are evident, however, if frequently hard to embrace, to those He has chosen and who have accepted His election. 13 The sequence of events since the creation of man and the handing over of the earth to Adam and Eve until the present we call: the events of the day. 14 Man's depravity and the evil thoughts in his heart had led to the estrangement between him and his creator. 15 Subsequently the flood engulfed mankind and everything that lived on earth. 16 Even after the deluge Noah's descendants succumbed to the same sinfulness as before. 17 For that reason perhaps the LORD chose a man to be the founding father of a people – His people. 18 Thus it was created, thus it was convened, thus it was chosen: God's tribe of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 19 It had not been an election in the true sense of the word because there was no choice; it would be more appropriate to refer to the creation of the people of Israel because God had created His chosen people over many, many years as the "firstborn son" and his "personal property". 20 Despite His bitter disappointment, God loved mankind so much that He made them joint custodians of the earth and repeatedly offered them covenants. 21 He made His first covenant with Noah so the rainbow would remind Him to never again destroy the whole of mankind.

22 His covenant with Abraham, however, already constituted a binding contract with the name change from Abram to Abraham, the handing over of land and the introduction of circumcision. 23 Abraham and his descendants would be forever obliged to have their male progeny circumcised as a visible symbol of the eternal covenant. 24 Furthermore Canaan was entrusted to Abraham and later his grandson

Jacob in perpetuity. ²⁵ Circumcision ushered in a new era on earth. ²⁶ Ever since, Abraham's descendants are recognized by this distinct mark. ²⁷ From that day on, from generation to generation, mankind has renewed and confirmed God's covenant with Abraham through the blood it sheds during the circumcision. ²⁸ And ever since Abraham's male descendants confer this covenant to their wives; the women shedding their blood during the first union with their husbands to also sign the contract. ²⁹ Many times and in many ways God has built on this covenant of circumcision, extended it, entered into additional covenants and never retracted it. ³⁰ But even those circumcised, the elected, became obstinate and hard-hearted and God kept building new bridges and searched for new ways to help them.

³¹ For centuries he let His people multiply, grow and mature in Egypt. ³² When their time had been served, He brought them to the Promised Land in a unique and wonderful way. ³³ These events are extensively documented in the Holy Scriptures and therefore not elaborated upon in this chronicle. ³⁴ Israel needed many years to find its place between God and the world. ³⁵ It never really succeeded. ³⁶ Numerous leaders, heroes and judges had come and gone until God found someone who greatly pleased Him: King David. ³⁷ Under his reign the Israelites became consolidated and organised as God's People with the Arc of the Covenant in Jerusalem. ³⁸ Finally everything appeared to right itself. ³⁹ But soon after Salomon's death the people started fighting amongst themselves and divided what God had joined together. ⁴⁰ The tribes of Israel would feel the consequences of the split for generations to come. ⁴¹ The subsequent days, months and years virtually teemed with events. ⁴² Many of these have forever vanished from the Israelites' memory. ⁴³ Some were recorded by the historians of the time; many found their way into the Holy Scriptures.

⁴⁴ The following record of events begins at a time of upheaval. ⁴⁵ The empires of the earth perish, kings are overthrown, new empires and new rulers emerge, new customs spread around the world. ⁴⁶ The prophets of God's People have been silent for quite a while; these are unstable times. ⁴⁷ Time-honoured traditions and mind-sets are discarded and replaced or modified because these are deemed superior in some people's view. ⁴⁸ But this certainly does not result in peace as the many struggles and wars between the Greek City States and the Macedonians testify. ⁴⁹ When the Macedonians defeated the alliance of Athens and Thebes in the Battle of Chareonea, both parties had to negotiate a peace treaty. ⁵⁰ This resulted in the so-called League of Corinth which united all the Greek City States except Sparta under the supreme leadership of the Macedonian King Philip. ⁵¹ He was, however, murdered not long after and succeeded by his young son Alexander.

⁵² Vigorously Alexander waged numerous wars of conquest; generally extremely successfully. ⁵³ His achievements increasingly encouraged him to pursue his goal of conquering Persia and even extending his realm as far as India. ⁵⁴ He basically planned to advance to the ends of the earth. ⁵⁵ At the time a long foreseeable schism occurred in Judea. ⁵⁶ The Samaritans segregated from the Jews of Jerusalem and from then on offered their sacrifices on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. ⁵⁷ Alexander defeated the army of the Persian king Darius and took his mother, wife and children prisoner. ⁵⁸ Then he fought his way through Tyre and Gaza to Egypt. ⁵⁹ Alexander's army was warmly welcomed by Jerusalem's priests and citizens. ⁶⁰ This assured Jerusalem's and Judea's continued autonomy in practicing their rites and some tax exemptions.

⁶¹ King Alexander's conquests had created a vast and powerful empire. ⁶² But he died unexpectedly and without a confirmed successor. ⁶³ His realm was divided amongst his generals. ⁶⁴ But his successors' greed for more and more land and power rendered them unsatisfied with their inheritance. ⁶⁵ Thus they embroiled themselves in countless intrigues and wars. ⁶⁶ The former Persian Empire's population could not find peace. ⁶⁷ Power struggles and battles caused much misery in the provinces. ⁶⁸ A huge number of people lost their lives, even more were maimed. ⁶⁹ Many Jewish mercenaries also fought for various generals. ⁷⁰ Some of the survivors, returning from different parts of the world, brought tidings of foreign cultures. ⁷¹ Of the way of life in India and Carthage; most of their accounts, however, concerned Hellenic cities and provinces. ⁷² Their reports included tales of numerous sages who spent much time in deep contemplation, profound conversation and writing about the most diverse aspects of the world.

⁷³ They also told about new ideas, of schools, lectures, debating competitions, of attempts to restructure the world; even to reinvent it. ⁷⁴ Thus the philosophers separated thought from everyday life, from concerns about the family, the means of subsistence and work. ⁷⁵ These men wholly or partly disassociated themselves from the ordinary lives of all mortal human beings, observed the daily activities of other people, watched mountains, oceans, rivers, the sky, studied ancient writings and pondered endlessly. ⁷⁶ Each of these wise men was immersed in his own thoughts and drew his own conclusions. ⁷⁷ And suddenly concepts, perceptions and words were redefined; "new worlds" opened up in their minds and a new way of life was born. ⁷⁸ And although most of these men did not like each other and occasionally engaged in heated verbal debates, they had one thing in common: a new way of viewing the world and life itself. ⁷⁹ They firmly believed that they had successfully reached for the sky and unveiled the secrets of creation. ⁸⁰ This provided sufficient grounds to view man as, at least, demigods, although

nobody voiced this out loud. ⁸¹ Later different thinkers' newly gathered insights were collected and became a general philosophy. ⁸² Despite the immense development of the human mind, people did not acknowledge the one true God; instead the Greek cities abounded with gods, demigods, heroes and idols. ⁸³ Man himself – venerating his own greatness, power and wisdom – became the biggest idol. ⁸⁴ The Macedonians ensured the demise of the Greek cities' hegemony, which had been built on wisdom. ⁸⁵ One still should not underestimate, let alone condemn, the sages' efforts even though they did not lead to the correct results. ⁸⁶ They had longed to discover truth and the meaning of life and the world. ⁸⁷ And they had tried to fill the void in their hearts; the emptiness inside every human being caused by the non-recognition of the true God. ⁸⁸ Although they had not discovered the one true God, they had developed many ways to facilitate the search. ⁸⁹ Had revealed many spiritual paths to God through a humble heart and an open mind. ⁹⁰ In consideration of their efforts to find God one can only exclaim: How lucky the Israelites should have considered themselves that God had already disclosed the whole truth to them such a long time ago!

⁹¹ The Greek cities, led by Athens, used the power struggles among Alexander's successors to start a war of liberation. ⁹² They had long been waiting for a suitable opportunity to free themselves from Macedonian dominion. ⁹³ Following initial triumphs, the Greeks increasingly got into difficulties. ⁹⁴ Athens' fleet was destroyed by the Macedonians in the Battle of Amorgos. ⁹⁵ Thus Athens lost its naval supremacy. ⁹⁶ Although the Greeks still managed to defend their position in the subsequent battle, they suffered such great losses that they had to propose a peace treaty to the Macedonians who were led by Antipater. ⁹⁷ Antipater was willing to enter into the treaty, but separately with each Greek city. ⁹⁸ However, the federation of Greek cities rejected the proposal. ⁹⁹ Subsequently Antipater attacked the cities of Thessaly, quickly conquered them and dictated his terms for a peace agreement. ¹⁰⁰ The alliance of Greek City States collapsed. ¹⁰¹ Some of them withdrew their troops in order to prepare them for a continuation of the war; others separately made peace with Antipater. ¹⁰² When the Macedonian started his march to Attica, Athens sent a delegation to meet him and negotiate a peace treaty. ¹⁰³ Antipater, however, was not willing to bargain, and Athens had no choice but accept his conditions. ¹⁰⁴ After he then also subdued the Peloponnesian cities, he returned to Macedonia to prepare for battle against Aetolia, the only region which had refused his terms. ¹⁰⁵ On marching into Aetolia with more than thirty thousand soldiers, he received the message that Perdiccas had attempted to seize power over the whole of Asia. ¹⁰⁶ Antipater interrupted his campaign and took his troops to Asia to wage war against Perdiccas, the regent of the empire, and thus secure his position as Alexander's successor. ¹⁰⁷ The Aetolians used his absence to march as

far as Locris where they defeated the Macedonians and occupied some cities. ¹⁰⁸ In an alliance with the last remaining free regions of Thessaly they formed a substantial army. ¹⁰⁹ One half of the troops marched to Aetolia, the other was to remain in Thessaly under the command of General Menon. ¹¹⁰ Menon's soldiers were defeated by the Macedonians' leader Polyperchon and Menon was killed. ¹¹¹ This was the last act of warfare in Greece until Antipater's death.

¹¹² Greece once again became the scene for numerous wars of succession. ¹¹³ Antigonus, after emerging as the outstanding victor of the second war for the succession, extended and cemented his power. ¹¹⁴ The remaining potential successors became extremely wary and aligned themselves against him. ¹¹⁵ Ptolemy, the ruler of Egypt, was the allies' leader. ¹¹⁶ Seleucus, who had fled to him, joined him in the third war of succession against Antigonus. ¹¹⁷ Seleucus was a tenacious and successful general. ¹¹⁸ After the victory near Gaza against Antigonus' son Demetrius Poliorcetes, he marched his army through the Syrian Desert and took control of the Mesopotamian cities. ¹¹⁹ He eventually conquered Babylon, too, and made it the base for founding his own empire. ¹²⁰ He successfully defended his conquests over several battles until Antigonus surrendered and made his peace with him. ¹²¹ Seleucus also brought many Greek cities into his dominion.

¹²² In the fourth war of succession Ptolemy's brother Menelaus was defeated near Cyprus by the troops of Demetrius, who fought for Antigonus. ¹²³ After this victory, Antigonus had himself proclaimed as king of the entirety of Alexander's realm. ¹²⁴ Then Antigonus sent his army to Egypt to bring Ptolemy to his knees. ¹²⁵ But Ptolemy successfully thwarted the enemy army's invasion. ¹²⁶ Now Ptolemy and his allies – Cassander, Lysimachus and Seleucus – also had themselves proclaimed as kings, but without defining the borders of their respective kingdoms. ¹²⁷ This caused further military conflicts. ¹²⁸ Demetrius and his father refused to acknowledge them as kings. ¹²⁹ Demetrius waged several wars of conquest against Cassander. ¹³⁰ He succeeded in taking Athens and let himself be celebrated as a "son of the gods". ¹³¹ Cassander, Lysimachus and Seleucus became even more firmly allied. ¹³² They took their armies to the East. ¹³³ Antigonus and Demetrius met them with a large force. ¹³⁴ The ensuing battle took place at Ipsus. ¹³⁵ Antigonus and Demetrius lost. ¹³⁶ The former died in the battle while part of his troops had already deserted him to join the other side during the altercations.

¹³⁷ The Battle of Ipsus heralded the end of the Alexandrian Empire. ¹³⁸ What Alexander had once founded and eventually established as a global power,

crumbled because his successors could not agree. ¹³⁹ Jerusalem was taken by Ptolemy. ¹⁴⁰ Many Jews were resettled; others emigrated voluntarily, mainly to Egypt. ¹⁴¹ A strong Jewish colony developed in Alexandria. ¹⁴² The Jews had to pledge loyalty to Ptolemy and his successors. ¹⁴³ A new era has begun; the future will show what it holds in store. ¹⁴⁴ In view of the past events, the only remaining consolation is the certainty that in the end God, the LORD of Israel, will have the last word after all.

Part ONE

CHAPTER 2

¹ *The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets.* ² *From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.*

³ Zion enjoyed some, if not continual, peace after Ptolemy had consolidated his reign. ⁴ Tidings of new wars, upheavals and revolts spread from all four corners of the globe. ⁵ Alexander's successors' thirst for power had not yet been satisfied. ⁶ The victors of the last war and some of their allies now ruled over various parts of the realm. ⁷ Seleucus reigned in the East; first in Babylon and later also in Syria. ⁸ Ptolemy ruled over Egypt, including Coele-Syria; Lysimachus of Thrace over the coastal regions. ⁹ The former allies now became enemies; each of them striving to conquer more land for himself. ¹⁰ Most of the military action took place in Greece. ¹¹ Initially Demetrius successfully fought against Pyrrhus and Lysimachus, but was soon defeated, taken prisoner and died in captivity. ¹² After Lysimachus went on to defeat Pyrrhus as well, he became the absolute ruler of Macedonia. ¹³ Anxious to consolidate his power by any means, he turned into a brutal tyrant. ¹⁴ His reign of terror became even more ruthless through the intrigues of his wife Arsinoe, one of Ptolemy's daughters. ¹⁵ Meanwhile Seleucus watched Lysimachus' tyranny with great distrust. ¹⁶ He seized the opportunity to march against Macedonia when Lysimachus' ally Ptolemy died. ¹⁷ Lysimachus was killed in the decisive battle and his army defeated. ¹⁸ But Seleucus did not survive for long either. ¹⁹ He was murdered on his way to Macedonia where he had intended to strengthen his dominant position. ²⁰ Thus died Alexander's last remaining successor.

²¹ While Ptolemy was still alive he elected the son named after him as his co-regent and heir. ²² The male offspring from his union with his outcast wife Eurydice, were excluded from the inheritance. ²³ Ptolemy the elder was buried in an elaborate ceremony by his successor. ²⁴ Later Ptolemy the younger proclaimed his deceased father as the "saviour" – Soter in Greek. ²⁵ Much changed for the Jews under the new ruler. ²⁶ Many displaced or enslaved Jews were redeemed or

granted their freedom. ²⁷ Some returned to Judea, the majority, however, remained in foreign lands. ²⁸ During the time of Eleazar, the High Priest, the Temple was also endowed with royal gifts and the temple service to some extent valorised. ²⁹ Despite all the improvements, the position of the Jewish people remained uncertain. ³⁰ Some of the Jews adopted the Hellenic ways of life in the diaspora; many even forgot their own language. ³¹ The rules of the Torah were only perfunctorily observed or not at all; the last remaining link to Jerusalem was the occasional visit to the Temple. ³² Reports of wars and uprisings in the western countries kept circulating. ³³ Carthage and Rome fought for supremacy in the west; sometimes as allies, sometimes as opponents and with variable success. ³⁴ Ptolemy sent several delegations to Rome to make contact with that ever more powerful nation. ³⁵ But he also dispatched his delegates to the eastern countries to establish diplomatic relations and explore trade routes.

³⁶ Conditions for the rural population gradually but steadily improved through new implements and tools that eased working the land and harvesting. ³⁷ The contact with foreign regions led to new knowledge and insights regarding a more efficient use of the soil. ³⁸ Building and creating new settlements were also aided by the newly acquired knowledge and tools to ease and speed up the work. ³⁹ But there is yet another form of progression. ⁴⁰ A change in attitude to life, which manifests in the people turning to idleness, amusements, play and entertainment.

⁴¹ Hellenic thought patterns flood the world's population to a greater degree and therefore also affect the Jews. ⁴² They are more and more fascinated with sports and the theatre, attend performances and forget their own language, become ever more removed from the spiritual life, pay less and less attention to God and even question the rules of the Torah. ⁴³ During sports events they eagerly support favoured individual combatants or teams, laugh at the opponents, mock the losers and are devastated or delighted depending on who won. ⁴⁴ Everyone now wages his own little "war", be it with abuse or threats, which often escalate in brawls or local battles. ⁴⁵ At the theatre one is thrilled by what other people have created and performed, praises or criticises foreign ideas and forgets one's own origins, tradition and piety; thus alien ideologies displaced one's own. ⁴⁶ Subsequently many Jews first became indifferent and eventually completely neglected studying the Torah. ⁴⁷ Their sages were extremely concerned about God's chosen people who began to wither and wilt in the face of their own laxness and dissension. ⁴⁸ And when the reshaping of provinces and realms, a new "arrangement" of the peoples, was underway, when the new way of life seemed to be conquering the world, when the Jewish faith in the one true God started to falter and confusion was at its height, something extraordinary happened.

49 It looked as if Israel's time would be over forever, as if the Jewish people were a thing of the past, as if they had doubted themselves and failed, deserted by God. 50 That was when the Almighty reawakened their tired spirits and provided the impetus for a new beginning in the world. 51 Just at this lowest point, when they started to disintegrate like a seed fallen to the earth, the Rock of Israel made them the new beacon of humanity. 52 It pleased God to reveal Himself to all of mankind through His people. 53 His word, His guidance – directed at the Jews, given to the Jews – was now disclosed to all human beings in accordance with His will. 54 The wise and devout men of Israel, seventy two in number, translated the Torah into Greek, the most important language of its day. 55 Thus God's revelation to his people became accessible to all men. 56 The earth was filled with the knowledge of God as had been foretold by the prophets in the scriptures of ancient times. 57 The Jews found it very hard to believe what was occurring while the pagans initially could not comprehend it at all. 58 The repercussions of the Greek translation of the Torah will still be felt after countless generations, yes, they will even intensify. 59 Since the reception of the Torah, the Israelites underwent endless baptisms by fire. 60 Without pause for breath; without time to rest. 61 And whenever there was a respite after all, the Israelites generally used that period to succumb to new sins. 62 To be purified by "fire" once more.

63 At times they really were a beacon of light as God's chosen people; at times they were a disgrace, but they never ceased to belong to God. 64 This was now confirmed by all peoples. 65 From now on every man and woman can search for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, pray to him and live in accordance with his directions, as long as they sincerely wish to do so. 66 If and to what extent they will avail of this opportunity shall remain to be seen. 67 Will the Jews, will Israel, benefit by this or will it be even more critically viewed by God and the rest of mankind? 68 But one thing is certain: the Jewish people have never tried to forcefully convert anyone to their faith. 69 They are busy enough with their own concerns and with their LORD. 70 But now an involuntary breakthrough has taken place and there is no turning back. 71 The LORD has spread His word across the whole world like the morning dew. 72 May it achieve what He has intended through His divine will.

Part ONE

CHAPTER 3

*1 Hear me, my people, and I will warn you – if you would only listen to me, Israel!
2 You shall have no foreign god among you; you shall not worship any god other than me.*

3 As soon as the Torah had been translated into Greek and thus made accessible to mankind, everyone tried to dissuade the Jews away from their revelation and direct their thoughts towards the pagan gods. 4 The pressure and influence from peoples with Hellenistic cultures was particularly pronounced. 5 It is therefore not surprising that a substantial part of the Jewish priests and scholars judged the translation of the Torah into Greek and the Greek way of life as overall negative.

6 Meanwhile the majority of the Jews encountered very different problems. 7 These were caused by military conflicts between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. 8 God frequently warned his people by subjecting them to foreign rule. 9 The Ptolemaic–Seleucid conflict near Coele-Syria ended in a peace treaty. 10 The marriage between Seleucus’ grandson Antiochus and Ptolemy’s granddaughter Berenice sealed the peace agreement. 11 However, when Antiochus deserted her seven years later to return to his former wife, this resulted in the third war between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. 12 Ptolemy, in an effort to restore Berenice’s honour, sailed with his military fleet in the direction of the Seleucid capital of Antioch. 13 When he arrived, Berenice and her son had already been murdered. 14 Ptolemy seized the opportunity to have his armies defeat Syria, Mesopotamia and Cilicia. 15 Thus the Ptolemaic Empire became one of the most influential powers in the world.

16 The Seleucid Empire, however, after having entered into a peace treaty with the Ptolemies, found itself in an extremely negative position. 17 Its provinces Bactria and Parthia gained their autonomy. 18 Bactria became the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, which spread as far as the border to India. 19 From there came tidings of its population’s different way of life and religious customs. 20 The Greeks were now exposed to Buddhism. 21 To a degree, Buddhism influenced the entire Hellenic world. 22 By now Rome had extended its power in the west. 23 New military strategies and weapons were developed. 24 The Romans were not concerned with the dissemination of their world view; they solely lusted for more land and power. 25 Rome’s adversary was Carthage, a former Phoenician colony. 26 The Romans called the residents of Carthage Punians based on their Phoenician origins. 27 The Punic region around Carthage they named Africa after the indigenous Afri tribe.

28 Carthage was a strong sea trading nation. 29 At first Rome and Carthage were on friendly terms and entered into various contracts. 30 But once the Romans had conquered considerable tracts of land, they also aspired to become a naval power. 31 This provided the basis for a dispute with Carthage. 32 The first war started with a conflict over Sicily. 33 The Romans had built their own fleet and destroyed

Carthage's navy with it. ³⁴ Subsequently Carthage also lost settlements on other islands. ³⁵ It tried to compensate for these losses by conquering regions on the Iberian Peninsula. ³⁶ To this end, it dispatched the distinguished general Hamilcar, referred to as Barca by the Romans, to Iberia. ³⁷ He succeeded in conquering regions rich in ore for Carthage. ³⁸ The Barcids founded the city of New Carthage in the south of the country and exercised their power from there. ³⁹ With the Romans they agreed on the Iberus River as the border between their realms. ⁴⁰ This agreement did not last long, however.

⁴¹ The dispute over a town led to the second war between Carthage and Rome. ⁴² Under Hannibal's command the Carthaginians marched over the Alps to Rome. ⁴³ The arduous journey cost Hannibal close to half of his soldiers. ⁴⁴ His plan was to cut off Rome from its allies and then attack. ⁴⁵ He ran into difficulties providing for his troops, so his soldiers resorted to plunder on the way. ⁴⁶ Despite this, the Carthaginians' strength still waned. ⁴⁷ Most of Rome's allies remained loyal and thereby reinforced its power. ⁴⁸ Rome now prepared a military campaign against Carthage under General Scipio. ⁴⁹ Hannibal had no choice but to retreat and was defeated at the Battle of Zama. ⁵⁰ Rome's triumph signified the end of Carthage's power, which then became a Roman vassal state.

⁵¹ The by now insignificant Greek City States used the Punic Wars to re-establish their former glory. ⁵² They were opposed by the Macedonians who wanted to maintain their supremacy over the City States. ⁵³ Since the Wars of Succession, the Macedonians had amassed one of the most powerful armies in the world. ⁵⁴ Philip, their ruler, entered into a pact with Hannibal and declared war on Rome. ⁵⁵ He also forged allegiances with the Syrian king Antiochus. ⁵⁶ When Macedonia once again interfered in domestic Greek matters, the Romans came to the rescue of Athens and the other Greek City States. ⁵⁷ In this way, Rome gradually gained influence in the Greek microstates while the Macedonian Kingdom lost its hold.

⁵⁸ Owing to the ever-changing alliances and wars, information becomes more widespread. ⁵⁹ News travelled more rapidly. ⁶⁰ One of the current innovations is the introduction of the Macedonian Calendar with the starting year being Seleucus' occupation of Babylon. ⁶¹ This calendar is also used in Syria and Judea. ⁶² After the Greeks have become familiar with the Torah, they also have parts of the other Jewish Holy Scriptures translated into Greek. ⁶³ The Gentiles have realised that the Jews regard themselves as the Chosen People based on the Torah and only pray to the one God. ⁶⁴ Trying to counteract this, they gradually persecute the Jews under the reign of the Seleucid Empire. ⁶⁵ Initially the Seleucids try to peacefully introduce their pagan customs to the Jews. ⁶⁶ Those Jews who are

prepared to accept the heathen way of life are appointed to public offices and even employed as judges. ⁶⁷ A group of Hellenised Jews forms. ⁶⁸ They approve of sporting events, theatre performances and dance festivities and actively participate. ⁶⁹ They even go as far as having altars erected to Greek idols and gods. ⁷⁰ The rest of the Jews vigorously condemn this. ⁷¹ A period of tribulation starts for the Jewish population. ⁷² If they shall survive depends on how steadfast they shall remain and to what extent the Rock of Israel will aid them.

Part ONE

CHAPTER 4

¹ *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

² Loyalty to the Torah on the one hand and turning to heathen practices on the other start to divide the Jewish people. ³ As the Jews have no say in world affairs, they become introvert; as such numerous, divergent groupings emerge among them. ⁴ These include lobbyists of all kinds, from rash fanatics and traditional observers of the Torah to admirers of pagan gods. ⁵ Amongst the priests and the political leaders there is no consensus either. ⁶ Once again God seems to have forgotten Israel; the Almighty, however, does not adhere to human criteria. ⁷ In these hard times only devout and law-abiding Jews are not panic-stricken and desperate. ⁸ They are well aware that the difficulties are due to the people's sins, but that these challenges are also God's test to determine the constancy of His elect. ⁹ The wheel of history drifts past the Jews because they don't keep it moving; the world does. ¹⁰ Empires come and go; rulers are enthroned and dethroned. ¹¹ The mighty become weak and complete unknowns enter the world's arena to wield their authority.

¹² Similar to the Greeks, the Romans also highly value the theatre and sporting events; only their styles differ. ¹³ The Romans make humans compete against wild beasts, delight in animals tearing each other apart and people being fed to the beasts. ¹⁴ Here the blood already flows in the arena and not after the games as is the case during the Greeks' contests when the spectators attack each other afterwards. ¹⁵ This even represents a certain degree of progress in the eyes of the pagans. ¹⁶ And now let us return to the events.

¹⁷ The Macedonians were repeatedly defeated by the Romans, lost their dominion over the Greek City States and had to pay compensatory tributes to Rome. ¹⁸ Rome wants to extend its realm towards the east. ¹⁹ There, in Coele-Syria, the Seleucids and Ptolemies are still fighting for supremacy. ²⁰ Antiochus, the ruler of the Seleucid Empire, defeated the Ptolemaic general Scopas near the source of the

Jordan. ²¹ Thus the Seleucids once more won the political dominance in Coele-Syria. ²² In order to subsequently secure the agreed peace between the two dynasties, Antiochus' daughter Cleopatra married Ptolemy. ²³ As the new ruler, Antiochus endorsed the Jews' religious freedom. ²⁴ While the Seleucids felt sure of their rule in Coele-Syria, the Romans suddenly invaded the area. ²⁵ In the Battle of Thermopylae, Antiochus was crushingly beaten by the Romans. ²⁶ After he was vanquished again at Magnesia, the Romans took his son, also called Antiochus, back to Rome as a hostage. ²⁷ Through the Peace Treaty of Apamea the regions east of the Great Ocean were now also under Roman rule.

²⁸ The Carthaginian general Hannibal, who had escaped from the Romans to Syria, had to flee once more after Antiochus' defeat. ²⁹ When the king of Bithynia threatened to extradite him to Rome, he committed suicide. ³⁰ Meanwhile the Macedonian king Perseus, the son of Philip, tried to re-establish the former glory of his realm. ³¹ He failed, however, and the Antigonid dynasty was subsequently dissolved.

³² After Antiochus' death, his son Seleucus became the ruler of the empire. ³³ Faced with a financial crisis caused by the tributary payments to Rome, he authorised his chancellor Heliodorus to plunder the Temple of Jerusalem. ³⁴ Heliodorus didn't succeed in carrying out this heinous crime and murdered the king soon after. ³⁵ He did this because Antiochus the younger, who had once been a hostage in Rome, had managed to form a political opposition against his brother Seleucus in Athens and Pergamum. ³⁶ When Antiochus, the fourth of his name from the Seleucid dynasty, became king, he engaged in a successful military campaign against Egypt. ³⁷ The Romans, however, thwarted his takeover of the entire country as they claimed certain regions for themselves. ³⁸ Antiochus had to turn back. ³⁹ He plundered the Temple in Jerusalem on his retreat and consecrated it to Zeus. ⁴⁰ Under his rule the Jews' position deteriorated when he abolished the privileges his father had granted them. ⁴¹ He endeavoured to politically, socially and religiously unite his realm by introducing Hellenic culture. ⁴² The Jews were now prohibited from practicing their religious rites, circumcision and reading the Torah. ⁴³ He appointed Jason, the brother of Onias, as the High Priest and he campaigned for the Hellenisation of the Jews. ⁴⁴ Right beside the temple he had a gymnasium erected and approved holding games in Jerusalem. ⁴⁵ The desecration of the Temple of Jerusalem was the worst outrage that could have been inflicted on the Jews. ⁴⁶ After a surfeit of atrocities in Judea and Jerusalem, the time had come for Israel and its God. ⁴⁷ But the LORD didn't strike the pagan altar in Jerusalem like lightning, no, He sparked a small glimmer of hope in nearby Modina through his elected one, Mattathias. ⁴⁸ What Mattathias and his sons

accomplished was neither done out of desperation nor revenge and certainly not driven by resignation. ⁴⁹ It was pure inspiration sparked in those devoted to God at certain moments. ⁵⁰ According to all human rules Mattathias' act at the sacrificial altar in Modina should have incurred the extermination of his kin and all law-abiding Jews. ⁵¹ Instead it provided the prelude for the restoration of Israel and a loyalty to God which had not been seen since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. ⁵² A people aware of its past and which honours God can not be exterminated, no matter how sinfully it behaves. ⁵³ In the end God himself leads His people against blasphemers and oppressors, be they from its own ranks or that of the heathens. ⁵⁴ God is the King of Israel and through Mattathias and his sons he glorified his name. ⁵⁵ When the world believes Israel to be destroyed and extinct, the LORD reawakens it to life and it raises itself up like the dry bones told about by the prophet Ezekiel. ⁵⁶ Let us remember the mighty Alexander and his global empire! ⁵⁷ What is an obscure man like Mattathias and a small place in Judea called Modina compared to him? ⁵⁸ And yet it was just here where the flame was lit which shall enlighten Israel and many peoples. ⁵⁹ After Mattathias slayed the king's official and the Jews who sacrificed their idols, he escaped into the mountains with his sons and other law-abiding Jews. ⁶⁰ From there they organised the struggle for liberation. ⁶¹ When they heard that the Jews who had fled from Jerusalem had been murdered on a Sabbath, they decided to also defend themselves against their enemies on that day.

⁶² Following Mattathias' death, his son Judah led the revolution. ⁶³ He and his army came to fame through their heroic victories. ⁶⁴ Even the cruel tyrant Antiochus, who, during his campaign, was informed of Judah's triumphs while fighting for his life in Persia due to severe illness, had an agreement drawn up for the Jews. ⁶⁵ Judah succeeded in purifying the temple in Jerusalem from the pagan idols and in reinstating the Jewish religious service. ⁶⁶ This event is celebrated annually by the Jews. ⁶⁷ Judah also offered an expiatory sacrifice to commemorate the fallen warriors. ⁶⁸ He dispatched a messenger to Rome to enter into a friendship treaty.

⁶⁹ Meanwhile Seleucus' son Demetrius, became king. ⁷⁰ Demetrius sent General Bacchides to war against the Jewish troops; in the Battle of Elasa he defeated the Jewish leader Judah, called Maccabeus. ⁷¹ After Judah's death, his brother Jonathan assumed control, but he and his men had to flee from Bacchides beyond the Jordan. ⁷² Jonathan, too, was extremely pious and steadfastly believed in God's justice and mercy towards the Jewish people.

Part ONE

CHAPTER 5

¹ *For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.*

² Better times dawn for the Jews with the reintroduction of the Jewish rites in the Temple of Jerusalem. ³ The blasphemers, however, begrudge them the hard-won freedom and once more begin intriguing against them. ⁴ The High Priest Alcimus, appointed by the Seleucid ruler Demetrius, orders to tear down the walls of the Temple's inner courtyard. ⁵ As Bacchides, Demetrius' general, is unable to defeat the Maccabees Jonathan and his brother Simon, he enters into a peace treaty with them. ⁶ The war in Israel appears to have ended and Jonathan starts judging the Jewish people. ⁷ This takes place in Michmash where Saul and his own son Jonathan had once started the battle against the Philistines. ⁸ During that time a man from Cilicia, Balas of Smyrna, claims to be the presumed murdered son of the Seleucid tyrant Antiochus. ⁹ The Pergamon king Atallus supports his claim. ¹⁰ Balas, who has adopted the name Alexander, appears before the Roman Senate accompanied by Antiochus' daughter Laodice and convinces the Senate of his right to the Seleucid throne. ¹¹ He establishes a counter-government in Ptolemy's port in Coele-Syria. ¹² In order to assert his position, his opponent Demetrius tries to join forces with Jonathan the Maccabee. ¹³ He grants him the right to maintain his own army and releases all Jewish prisoners from the fortress in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Subsequently Jonathan fortifies Mount Zion and begins to restore Jerusalem. ¹⁵ When Alexander Balas hears of the Maccabee's courage he also extends his hand in friendship. ¹⁶ He instates Jonathan as High Priest, who takes up office during the Sukkot celebrations. ¹⁷ Demetrius' former brutal deeds make Jonathan distrust him. ¹⁸ Alexander Balas, supported by the Ptolemaic Egyptians, defeats Demetrius and becomes the ruler of the Seleucid Empire. ¹⁹ To consolidate his position, he marries the Ptolemaic princess Cleopatra.

²⁰ In the meantime Rome attempted to conquer large regions of Hispania. ²¹ The Celtiberian tribes fought back. ²² The head of the resistance was Viriatus, an important leader from Lusitania. ²³ Rome signed a peace agreement with him, but had him murdered later on. ²⁴ Meanwhile there was also conflict between Carthage and the Numidian kingdom bordering it to the west. ²⁵ Numidia had been internally divided ever since the Punic War: the eastern part sympathized with Rome, the western part with Carthage. ²⁶ Rome appointed King Massinissa as the ruler of all Numidia; his kingdom extended as far as Mauretania to the west. ²⁷ Secure in the knowledge of Rome's backing, Massinissa led a number of attacks on Carthaginian regions. ²⁸ Carthage sent its army to fight the Numidian king. ²⁹ Thus started a war which saw Carthage utterly destroyed by the Romans after three years of hard battle. ³⁰ At the same time Rome also subdued the Greek City

States. ³¹ The Archaic League, based in Corinth, opposed Rome. ³² When the states of the Archaic League declared war on Sparta, they got into conflict with the Romans. ³³ The Romans reduced Corinth to rubble; the men were executed, the rest of the population sold into slavery. ³⁴ Beside Macedonia and Africa the Greek City States now also became Roman provinces. ³⁵ Under Roman rule, the Greek culture kept flourishing. ³⁶ Quite early on Rome received a delegation of Greek philosophers. ³⁷ Now the Romans also took part in the Olympic Games. ³⁸ Meanwhile in Cilicia, Demetrius' son of the same name started fighting for supremacy of the Seleucid Empire. ³⁹ His governor in Coele-Syria led the battles against Alexander, but was defeated by Jonathan in Gaza. ⁴⁰ At first, the Egyptian Pharaoh Ptolemy came to the aid of his son-in-law Alexander. ⁴¹ On his way he occupied numerous cities. ⁴² Eventually he changed over to Demetrius' side and offered him his daughter Cleopatra's hand in marriage as a part of their alliance, the daughter he had previously given as a wife to Alexander. ⁴³ With the Egyptians' help, Demetrius beat Alexander near the Seleucid capital of Antioch. ⁴⁴ Three days later, Ptolemy died, the sixth of that name under the Ptolemaic dynasty. ⁴⁵ It was he who allowed the high priest Onias, who had fled from Jerusalem, to erect a Jewish temple in the Egyptian city of Leontopolis in the Nile Delta. ⁴⁶ At that time a group of devout Jews withdrew into the desert close to the Salt Sea to live there in seclusion. ⁴⁷ They established their own communal rules and occupied themselves with copying, translating or rephrasing religious Jewish writings. ⁴⁸ These also included the Book of Jubilees which chronicles the Jewish history from the beginning of the world up to the exodus from Egypt. ⁴⁹ Following the death of Alexander and Ptolemy, Demetrius became the absolute ruler of the entire Seleucid Empire. ⁵⁰ Meanwhile Antiochus, the son of Alexander and Cleopatra, appointed Jonathan Maccabee as the governor of Coele-Syria and his brother Simon as general of the coastal region. ⁵¹ Antiochus' own general Diodotus, however, took over the leadership of Syria and had Jonathan deviously murdered. ⁵² Simon recognised Demetrius as the Seleucid ruler and in turn was appointed as the High Priest and Ethnarch of Judea.

⁵³ Simon's Sohn Johanan became Commander in Chief. ⁵⁴ Simon renewed the friendship treaty with Rome. ⁵⁵ Together with his sons Judah and Mattathias he was murdered by his son-in-law in Jericho. ⁵⁶ His third son Johanan became his successor. ⁵⁷ He achieved political independence for the Jews and his politics were aimed at expansion. ⁵⁸ In the south he added Idumaea to the Jewish state. ⁵⁹ In the north he conquered Samaria and destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim. ⁶⁰ The people were therefore forced to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and make their sacrifices in its Temple.

⁶¹ The Romans quelled a slave uprising; thousands of slaves were crucified. ⁶² The Romans successfully founded the province of Gaul beyond the Alps. ⁶³ The Cimbri and Teuton tribes didn't stand by and watch. ⁶⁴ Jugurtha, the new King of Numidia, also opposed Rome. ⁶⁵ The Roman army was put under the command of General Gaius Marius and reformed by him. ⁶⁶ He defeated the Numidians as well as the Teuton, Ambrone and Cimbri tribes who were threatening Rome. ⁶⁷ In Judea, Johanan's son Aristobulus has himself proclaimed king and takes the epithet Hyrcanus. ⁶⁸ He conquers a region of Galilee where he tries to introduce the Jewish way of life. ⁶⁹ When he dies a year later, his brother Jonathan takes over the leadership and the office of High Priest. ⁷⁰ He takes the name Alexander Jannaeus and marries his widowed sister-in-law Salome. ⁷¹ After a long time the Jews finally have a kingdom again. ⁷² Future generations will live to see if it will endure in God's eyes.

Part ONE

CHAPTER 6

¹ Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore; those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.

² The Romans keep conquering more and more new regions; the old empires perish and become Roman provinces. ³ Rome has to find ways of successfully governing such large territories. ⁴ A taxing task for the Roman administration. ⁵ To overcome the newly emerging problems, it supplements old laws and drafts new ones. ⁶ Before being passed, each new law requires the approval of the Senate whose members belong to the most eminent Roman families. ⁷ Every year the populace elects two consuls; they are entrusted with the highest civil and military powers and monitor each other's actions. ⁸ After completion of their term in office, the Senate assigns them a province to govern as proconsul. ⁹ Whenever the Roman state is threatened by military dangers, a dictator with absolute power is appointed for half a year.

¹⁰ In those days Rome experienced difficulties with the allied Italic tribes. ¹¹ They tried to force Rome to confer its civil rights to them and even established their own senate in the city of Corfinium which they renamed Italica. ¹² After long battles, Roman citizenship was granted to those who had remained loyal to Rome. ¹³ In the east, Rome had to govern the new province of Asia whose territory had passed onto the Romans after Attalus, the last King of Pergamon, had bequeathed it to them. ¹⁴ This displeased the Pontic king Mithridates who subsequently incited the Greeks living in Asia to revolt against the high taxes the Roman government imposed. ¹⁵ From his new residence in Ephesus, Mithridates ordered to have all

Romans and Italics in Asia slain within a day. ¹⁶ The people of Athens joined the resistance movement against the Romans.

¹⁷ In Rome an altercation occurs between the populace and the Senate. ¹⁸ It concerns the warfare against Mithridates. ¹⁹ The citizens want to transfer the army command to Gaius Marius since he had reformed it. ²⁰ The Senate, on the other hand, prefers the consul Lucius Cornelius Sulla who has distinguished himself in the Social War. ²¹ The confrontation results in a civil war between the two sides. ²² Sulla does not want the Senate's commission of solving the crisis in the east to be taken from him and marches with his troops against Athens, then into the province of Asia. ²³ In Rome Gaius Marius' followers seize power. ²⁴ Gaius Marius dies soon after. ²⁵ Sulla makes his peace with the Pontic king and thus Mithridates remains the ruler of Pontus. ²⁶ Sulla hastens back to Rome where he ends the civil war and has many of his political opponents murdered. ²⁷ He has himself announced as dictator. ²⁸ The young Gnaeus Pompeius, one of Sulla's supporters, is married to Sulla's stepdaughter. ²⁹ As a general, Pompeius establishes order in Sicilia, Africa and Hispania. ³⁰ At the end of his term as a Roman consul, he is sent to sea to fight the pirates who are undermining Rome's trade.

³¹ After Seleucus' death, the Seleucid Empire split into several regions which warred amongst each other. ³² The population of Cilicia used the opportunity to turn to the profitable course of piracy. ³³ Pompeius destroyed them and Cilicia became a Roman province. ³⁴ He also defeated the Pontic king and thus Pontus and Bithynia were also made Roman provinces. ³⁵ In the east the Romans are now bordered by the militarily strong Parthians with whom they have agreed on the river Euphrates as the dividing line. ³⁶ The Jewish kingdom also underwent considerable changes. ³⁷ During the reign of Alexander Jannaeus a group of devout Jews revolted against the growing Hellenisation of the kingdom. ³⁸ They summoned Alexander to decide between the office of ruler and that of High Priest. ³⁹ Under Alexander's reign the Sadducees held the majority in the Supreme Council and influenced Jewish politics. ⁴⁰ The opposition was able to count on the support of the common populace because it voiced, amongst other issues, its dissatisfaction with the disproportionate distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor. ⁴¹ Furthermore it held the view that the temple service should be subordinate to not only the Torah but also to the writings of the prophets which the Sadducees didn't recognise, however. ⁴² It escalated in an uprising by the opposition which was violently suppressed. ⁴³ Only on his deathbed did Alexander call on the two groups to exercise greater tolerance. ⁴⁴ After Alexander, his wife Salome occupied the Jewish throne and assumed the Greek name Alexandra.

⁴⁵ Salome Alexandra was the first Jewish queen. ⁴⁶ As a woman she couldn't assume the High Priest's office; her son Johanan Hyrcanus, the designated king, therefore filled the position. ⁴⁷ Under Alexandra's reign the scholar Shimon ben Shetach became the representative of the Supreme Council. ⁴⁸ He abolished the Pharisaic interpretation of Jewish law. ⁴⁹ His reforms concerned the marriage laws and the establishment of boys' schools for the teaching of the Torah.

⁵⁰ The increasingly cornered Sadducees were entrusted with border patrol duties. ⁵¹ The queen's power-hungry son Aristobulus exploited this after her death and won many of the soldiers over to his side against his brother Hyrcanus. ⁵² The Idumaeen Antipater counselled Hyrcanus during this difficult time. ⁵³ Hyrcanus allied himself with the Nabataean king Aretas. ⁵⁴ Aristobulus for his part approached the Roman general Pompeius, who was fighting against the Armenian king Tigranes in Syria, for help. ⁵⁵ Thus Hyrcanus was initially defeated and Aristobulus took the Jewish throne. ⁵⁶ Hyrcanus, however, with Antipater's aid, soon persuaded Pompeius onto his side. ⁵⁷ When Hyrcanus' followers opened the gates of Jerusalem to Pompeius, Aristobulus entrenched himself and his legion in Jerusalem's Temple for a number of months. ⁵⁸ To the general consternation of the Jews, Pompeius entered the Temple's Holy of Holies when he eventually subdued Aristobulus. ⁵⁹ Pompeius confirmed Hyrcanus as High Priest, but he divided Judea into districts and assigned it to the Roman province of Syria. ⁶⁰ Aristobulus' family was taken to Rome as hostages with the exception of his son Alexander, who successfully escaped. ⁶¹ While Pompeius lingered outside Rome, others in the city were scheming. ⁶² Among them Gaius Julius Caesar, general, orator and provost of the Sacred Council. ⁶³ He had settled the long-standing feud between Crassus and Pompeius. ⁶⁴ With the help of those two men he was elected consul and gave Pompeius the hand of his daughter Julia in marriage. ⁶⁵ Then he became proconsul of Gaul. ⁶⁶ There he waged warfare against the Helvetii and the Britons. ⁶⁷ Egypt, too, faced disputes over the throne. ⁶⁸ The ruling Ptolemy was ousted and went to Rome for support. ⁶⁹ With Rome's help he was reinstated as king of Egypt. ⁷⁰ Rome now rules close to the entire world. ⁷¹ But it still isn't enough. ⁷² Israel, on the other hand, gradually loses its autonomy and importance due to inner strife.

Part ONE

CHAPTER 7

¹ You, LORD, showed favor to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.

² When Hyrcanus was High Priest in Jerusalem and Antipater was the appointed Governor, a message reached Judea which brought apart from grief also a certain amount of relief. ³ Hyrcanus' brother Aristobulus had lost his life in Rome while his son Antigonus successfully escaped. ⁴ The Roman Empire experienced unrest and wars when Julius Caesar refused to accept the Senate's decision to deprive him of his power. ⁵ He marched with his army against Rome where Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus had been commissioned by the Senate to defend the city. ⁶ Pompeius, however, realised that he didn't have sufficient troops and fled with his soldiers. ⁷ Caesar pursued him and they engaged in combat in Thessaly. ⁸ Julius Caesar won by deceit. ⁹ Pompeius fled to Egypt where Ptolemy, fearing Caesar, had him assassinated. ¹⁰ Caesar, who had followed Pompeius to Egypt, settled the dispute over the throne between Ptolemy and his sister Cleopatra. ¹¹ At his instigation Cleopatra was instated as co-regent. ¹² This led to a revolt against Caesar in Alexandria. ¹³ Mithridates of Pergamon and Antipater rushed to Caesar's side with their troops and once again Caesar was victorious through cunning. ¹⁴ He now appointed the younger Ptolemy as co-regent because the elder Ptolemy had died. ¹⁵ A romantic relationship developed between Cleopatra and Caesar and resulted in their son Ptolemy Caesarion. ¹⁶ Caesar confirmed Antipater and Hyrcanus in their respective offices and Antipater was permitted to re-erect Jerusalem's walls. ¹⁷ Antipater entrusted the command of Jerusalem to his older son Phasael and that of Galilee to his younger son Herod. ¹⁸ Herod successfully fought bands of brigands and, particularly by the Syrians, he was celebrated as a liberator. ¹⁹ Antipater was poisoned, but Herod also condemned the instigator of the murder to death.

²⁰ Meanwhile Julius Caesar had won several battles against Pompeius' sons and followers. ²¹ Subsequently he returned as the supreme ruler to Rome where he was instated as dictator. ²² He introduced a new calendar. ²³ Initially many of the senators had been delighted with Caesar; now they feared he might entirely deprive them of their voice in the Senate. ²⁴ In the conspiracy against him that followed, Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus were the main antagonists. ²⁵ Caesar was stabbed to death during a Senate meeting at the theatre of Pompey. ²⁶ The leaders of the complot fled from Rome. ²⁷ After Caesar's assassination Gaius Octavius, Marcus Antonius and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus formed the second Triumvirate. ²⁸ They pursued Caesar's murderers, who committed suicide after being defeated. ²⁹ Caesar being proclaimed as a god was met with contempt in Judea. ³⁰ Yet the Judeans filed charges with Marcus Antonius against Herod and Phasael. ³¹ Marcus Antonius did not entertain them. ³² Instead he had the mutineers violently punished. ³³ The High Priest's nephew, Antigonus Mattathias, seized the moment to further his own aims. ³⁴ With the aid of the

Parthians he conquered Judea and instated himself as High Priest. ³⁵ His uncle had been captured by the Parthians; Antigonus Mattathias had his ears cut off to render him ineligible for the position. ³⁶ After the Parthians had taken Jerusalem, Phasael committed suicide while Herod fled to Rome. ³⁷ Soon after he returned to lay siege to the city. ³⁸ The Roman Senate had proclaimed him as King of Judea. ³⁹ Herod conquered Jerusalem and on Marcus Antonius' orders he had Antigonus Mattathias executed. ⁴⁰ Herod divorced his first wife and married Mariamne, a granddaughter of the High Priest Hyrcanus, to win favour with the populace. ⁴¹ On being urged by his mother-in-law, Herod bestowed the office of High Priest to his brother-in-law Aristobulus and deposed Ananel who had previously held the post. ⁴² However, he disliked how enthusiastically the people hailed the young High Priest at the Feast of Tabernacles. ⁴³ After Aristobulus had drowned, presumably with the help of Herod's servants, Herod reinstated Ananel. ⁴⁴ This made him even more unpopular with the people. ⁴⁵ Meanwhile the Roman Empire was once again engaged in civil wars. ⁴⁶ During a naval battle, Octavius defeated Marcus Antonius who escaped together with Cleopatra. ⁴⁷ After these events, Cleopatra had Artavasdes, the King of Armenia, beheaded. ⁴⁸ Devastated by their defeat, Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra killed themselves. ⁴⁹ Marcus Agrippa overcame the fleet of Sextus Pompeius, which blocked the grain supplies to Rome, in a naval battle. ⁵⁰ In Rome he built a temple dedicated to all gods. ⁵¹ In Cantabria he successfully put an end to the local unrest and wars. ⁵² To prevent an uprising, Octavius had Caesar and Cleopatra's son Caesarion assassinated. ⁵³ The Senate conferred the name Augustus upon him. ⁵⁴ Herod built temples, theatres, cities and ports. ⁵⁵ Extremely successful with his building projects, his family affairs were quite the opposite. ⁵⁶ These were dominated by infighting, deploying forged letters, countless intrigues and slanderous accusations. ⁵⁷ Herod therefore had nearly his entire family murdered. ⁵⁸ To finance his ambitious building plans, he financially crippled the Jewish nation. ⁵⁹ The more it was exploited and suppressed, the more fervently it pleaded with God for the coming of the Messiah.

⁶⁰ Augustus skilfully consolidated his autocracy. ⁶¹ He introduced a new currency of gold, silver, brass and copper coins. ⁶² With the Parthians he entered into a peace treaty. ⁶³ The Euphrates became the designated border. ⁶⁴ Prisoners were exchanged. ⁶⁵ Augustus' stepson, Nero Claudius Drusus, crushed the Germanic revolts. ⁶⁶ An initially minor conflict degenerated into a war against the Batavians. ⁶⁷ Nero Claudius Drusus's army defeated them as well. ⁶⁸ Although the Empire is now vast, the population growth is minimal. ⁶⁹ For this reason Augustus passes several new laws. ⁷⁰ One of them entails punishment in the case of adultery and deviant sexual conduct. ⁷¹ Another includes sanctions against the unmarried. ⁷² If they shall produce the desired results remains to be seen.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 1

¹ *The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear?* ² *The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?* ³ When Octavius Augustus was the Roman Emperor and King Herod ruled over the Jews, strange events took place in the provinces of the former Israel. ⁴ The population suffered extreme hardship through oppressive taxation, the trespasses of the Roman soldiers and the royal officials' despotism. ⁵ The people became impoverished, impatient and intemperate and blamed Rome and Herod. ⁶ Several solutions to overcome their plight were suggested. ⁷ Some called for insubordination; others favoured reaching a settlement with the Emperor and the King in order to at least avail of certain easements. ⁸ A third faction advocated armed struggle and violent liberation of the Jewish people as the only escape from a life of servitude. ⁹ The morale was dismal and ominous. ¹⁰ On the one hand the hope of the populace for a better future was being fed; on the other individuals appeared who, convinced that something needed to be done, claimed to be the Messiah or at least did not deny it when they were assumed to be him. ¹¹ The people also believed that only a Messiah could deliver them from their bondage. ¹² It was therefore all the easier to manipulate them and harness their energy for devious goals. ¹³ Approximately around this time a girl called Miriam, i.e. Mary of Nazareth in Galilee, gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ The girl, or rather young woman, was married to Joseph from the tribe of David. ¹⁵ The child was born in Bethlehem in Judea. ¹⁶ The boy's mother and her husband alleged that the boy had not been conceived through natural means but through a miracle from God. ¹⁷ The couple's story would certainly not have been heeded if something else had not also occurred. ¹⁸ On the night before the birth the shepherds from Bethlehem's surroundings visited the mother and the new-born with incredible tidings. ¹⁹ On that night they had experienced God's glory, had seen and heard His angels. ²⁰ They related how the angels had delivered a message with great cheer. ²¹ To Israel's joy, the Messiah, the Saviour, the LORD had been born on that night in David's town, they claimed. ²² And that the angels had sent them here where they would find the mother of the new-born child. ²³ When the boy was circumcised on the eighth day, the parents gave him the name Yeshua, which means Jesus.

²⁴ On that day more strange events occurred regarding the child. ²⁵ Astrologers came to Jerusalem from the east and asked for the new-born King of the Jews. ²⁶ The stars had foretold that a new King of the Jews had been born. ²⁷ Their assertions greatly troubled King Herod and the scholars; the scribes directed the astrologers towards Bethlehem as this was the town from where the Messiah was expected. ²⁸ Although the astrologers' wisdom did not suffice to locate the child

itself, their tale astonished its mother. ²⁹ When the boy's parents brought him to the Temple on the fortieth day to establish the Law of the Firstborn, entirely unknown persons foretold greatness for their son Jesus. ³⁰ The mother as well as numerous witnesses from Bethlehem, Jerusalem and later on also Nazareth remembered the prophecy. ³¹ When Jesus reached his twelve year, his whole family went to the celebrations in Jerusalem, as was the custom. ³² Once the festivities were over and they were already on their way home, they realised that Jesus was missing. ³³ Several hours later they found him in the Temple, deeply engrossed in a discussion with teachers and scholars of the law. ³⁴ All those present were enraptured by the knowledge and keen mind of this prodigy. ³⁵ The teachers of the law would, no doubt, have been delighted to count him amongst their numbers, and Jesus himself would have liked to stay, but his mother adamantly insisted that the boy accompany his parents back to Nazareth. ³⁶ Back in his home town he assisted his father as a carpenter.

³⁷ The situation in Jerusalem and its surroundings was extremely tense. ³⁸ King Herod had died and his demise started a bitter battle for his succession. ³⁹ In the end, his realm was divided between his three sons. ⁴⁰ Archelaus became Tetrarch of Judea and Idumaea, Antipas of Galilee and Philip of Ituraea and Trachonitis. ⁴¹ Later Archelaus was disempowered by the Emperor and Judea became a Roman province. ⁴² In those days there were numerous small and large unrests, battles and rebellions; the Roman soldiers were increasingly hated for their audacious abuses in Jerusalem and the Temple. ⁴³ The discord between the Jewish factions and the ruthlessness of the Roman soldiers led to a close to intolerable situation which prophesised ominous times. ⁴⁴ Amidst the heated tempers, the more level-headed parties, who endeavoured to strike a compromise with Rome, were ignored. ⁴⁵ During those troubled times a certain Johanan, i.e. John, entered the world stage and preached repentance and proclaimed the Kingdom of God. ⁴⁶ His sermons had an enormous effect and many came to him after confessing their sins to be baptised in the river Jordan as a sign of their conversion. ⁴⁷ He never claimed to be the Messiah or a prophet, but a voice in the wilderness heralding the coming of someone greater. ⁴⁸ One day Jesus of Nazareth, who had already surrounded himself with several disciples, came to him and was baptised by him in the Jordan. ⁴⁹ According to eyewitnesses, on Jesus being immersed in the water several miraculous signs occurred and John also claimed that Jesus of Nazareth was the one he had heralded.

⁵⁰ From then on Jesus and his apostles started roaming through Judea, Samaria and Galilee proclaiming the coming of God's Kingdom. ⁵¹ Jesus affirmed his talks, sermons and lectures with numerous miracles, thus attracting ever greater crowds.

⁵² The possessed and the sick were brought to him and healed. ⁵³ Many of them enthusiastically received his interpretation of the Torah and more and more disciples gathered around him. ⁵⁴ There were, however, also many who were simply curious, those who wanted to witness miracles and those thirsting for sensation. ⁵⁵ And there were teachers of the law, sent by the High Priest to verify if what was taking place was in fact God's work or the work of demons and charlatans. ⁵⁶ Neither should we forget the group of Zealots fighting for Israel's liberation, who hoped that Jesus would lead them into battle as the Messiah and triumph over the Romans. ⁵⁷ They would be most bitterly disappointed. ⁵⁸ Jesus had no intention of waging war against anyone, quite the contrary, in fact: he incessantly called for peace, reconciliation, altruism and the return to God. ⁵⁹ A deep schism regarding Jesus' teachings developed among the people as well as the teachers of the law. ⁶⁰ Moreover, Jesus frequently behaved provocatively during celebrations in Jerusalem and argued with scholars, Pharisees and Sadducees. ⁶¹ He accused the priests and the temple servants of having defiled the Temple through their neglect and of turning God's House into a market place. ⁶² He also alienated some who wanted to follow him in the hope of thus escaping from poverty and sickness. ⁶³ Jesus categorically refused assuming a leading role in the fight for liberation or a social uprising. ⁶⁴ His disciples he divided into two groups: twelve as his inner circle and seventy two more as his extended circle. ⁶⁵ He explained the sacred writings to the disciples, interpreted the laws of the Torah and quotations by the prophets and instructed his followers about the secrets of the human heart and the vulnerability of the soul. ⁶⁶ Yet he was not too familiar with anyone except for three apostles from among the twelve; but even those often misunderstood him, frequently did not comprehend him at all and were too afraid to ask for explanations. ⁶⁷ Jesus was apparently extremely secretive and did not show the least inclination to proclaim himself as the Messiah or have others do so.

⁶⁸ On the one hand he was provocative, argumentative, easily irritated, brusque, occasionally insulting, on the other full of love, compassion and altruism when approached by the weakest and most poverty stricken. ⁶⁹ Thus it continued for several years and the populace became more divided the more renowned he became. ⁷⁰ The broad masses clung to him while religious leaders became increasingly agitated. ⁷¹ They believed a schism amongst the population was counterproductive to the goals of the Jewish nation. ⁷² Moreover, they were outraged, sometimes even scandalised, by Jesus' interpretation of the Torah which differed from theirs. ⁷³ Yet Jesus repeatedly stressed that not a single character of the Torah must be changed or distorted.

⁷⁴ He accused the teachers of the law and some Pharisees of instructing others in the Torah while not observing its teachings themselves. ⁷⁵ They, in turn, criticised his close connection to the Essenes, a problematic group which lived an extremely ascetic life. ⁷⁶ Furthermore, they were irritated by his emphasis on the importance of personal conversion, the reconciliation with God, the neighbours and oneself, the praying in solitude, the joyful observance of fasting and altruism. ⁷⁷ It seemed as if Jesus was not just addressing the people of Israel, but each individual person, regardless if Jew or Gentile. ⁷⁸ This was augmented by his advocating pacifism, tolerating humiliation and loving one's enemies. ⁷⁹ The Romans mistrusted the large gatherings he attracted wherever he went, suspecting that his followers were secretly plotting an uprising. ⁸⁰ How controversial he was is evidenced by the fact that even many of his disciples deserted him because they could not comprehend his sermons and his actions. ⁸¹ Jesus made no attempt to persuade them to stay, let alone to attract new disciples. ⁸² The events escalated when one of his apostles betrayed him to the High Council which, after interrogating him and internal disputes, handed him over to the Proconsul Pilate with the demand of sentencing him to death by crucifixion. ⁸³ The High Priest's main justification for Jesus' conviction was his claim that it was better that a single man died for the people than the entire nation perishing. ⁸⁴ Pilate had Jesus flogged; the soldiers ridiculed him and crowned him "King of the Jews" with a crown of thorns; in the end Pilate decreed that Jesus be crucified.

⁸⁵ Most of his disciples fled and went into hiding on that day. ⁸⁶ Jesus died on the cross and was buried. ⁸⁷ Some days later, however, his disciples as well as several women from his former following claimed that he had risen from the dead. ⁸⁸ They told their story with so much joy and delight that many believed them. ⁸⁹ The number of disciples who claimed to have seen the Resurrected one kept increasing and so did the number of people who trusted their accounts. ⁹⁰ Particularly impressive was the fact that his disciples, nearly without exception simple folk from Galilee, suddenly spoke fluently and in an educated and fearless manner, which nobody who had previously known them could understand. ⁹¹ They even worked miracles, which attracted an even greater following, and thus got into conflict with the High Council. ⁹² Jesus' followers gradually starting forming communities which lived a life resembling that of the Essenes. ⁹³ Their leader, Simon bar-Jonah, called Kepha, kept repeating the charge that although the High Council and the priests had sentenced Jesus to death while being ignorant of the facts, they had still done it deliberately.

⁹⁴ The clergy was not prepared to accept the blame and persecuted the disciples relentlessly. ⁹⁵ They were now forbidden to spread their teachings under threat of

violence, but the disciples insisted that they obeyed none but God's Law. ⁹⁶ When their leaders had once again been arrested to be interrogated, the High Council heatedly debated how to further proceed with these people. ⁹⁷ At the end of the discussion an eminent member of the Council stated: ⁹⁸ *Let these men go; if their plans and works were designed by humans they shall be destroyed, but if they come from God, you can not crush them and will end up fighting God Himself.* ⁹⁹ Thereupon Jesus' disciples were flogged and eventually released after they had been forbidden to disseminate their faith any further. ¹⁰⁰ The disciples' reaction clearly indicated that they would not adhere to the condition. ¹⁰¹ Their proclamations provoked the advocates of the traditional interpretation of the Torah among the scholars to such an extent that their retaliation was not long coming.

¹⁰² More and more hostile groups emerged and also notable persecutors of the "Path", as the new doctrine was called, among them a Pharisee and scholar by the name of Saul. ¹⁰³ On his initiative the persecutions of the followers of Jesus' disciples intensified; many of them were arrested, some of them even stoned to death. ¹⁰⁴ Saul's best known victim was Stephen who was stoned outside the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁰⁵ And still Jesus' teachings spread throughout all the provinces of the Roman Empire. ¹⁰⁶ Saul took the road to Damascus to arrest the followers of Jesus' teachings located there. ¹⁰⁷ On his way something extraordinary occurred which converted Saul from an ardent persecutor into an advocate and herald of the new doctrine. ¹⁰⁸ Opinions about this differed widely. ¹⁰⁹ Some claimed he had become insane, others that he had been bribed by the disciples. ¹¹⁰ Saul himself affirmed that he had had a vision where Jesus had entirely convinced him of the truth of his teachings and appointed him as one of his evangelists. ¹¹¹ Through Saul the situation of the community of Jesus had decisively changed. ¹¹² As the most educated amongst them and the most experienced in interpreting the Torah, he was able to link it to Jesus' teachings in a way comprehensible to the scholars and Pharisees and thus attracted new followers again. ¹¹³ He now also pronounced Jesus as the Saviour and Redeemer to the Gentiles, which posed a problem.

¹¹⁴ The Gentiles were not familiar with and did not adhere to the rules of the Torah. ¹¹⁵ They were therefore requested to undergo instruction, be circumcised and follow the rules of the Torah in order to become an equal member of the Church of Jesus. ¹¹⁶ But Saul and some of the disciples disagreed. ¹¹⁷ Everyone was united in the belief that it was God's will to accept Gentiles into the communities and let them participate in Jesus' teachings, but disagreed about the conditions under which this should take place. ¹¹⁸ Years of strife, consultation and discussion ensued. ¹¹⁹ Eventually it was decided that circumcision and adherence to the Torah was not a requirement of being accepted into the Church as long as the Gentiles

accepted Jesus as their Redeemer and Teacher and observed the Seven Laws of Noah. ¹²⁰ Now two different ways of life clashed dramatically and unsustainable tension, envy, strife and jealousy ensued. ¹²¹ Saul was the first to realise that the situation had become intolerable. ¹²² He was of the opinion that Jesus was far more than just a Jewish Messiah, prophet and teacher. ¹²³ He believed Jesus was the Son of God who had redeemed all of mankind from its sins and who would lead every individual person to the faith in the One True God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ¹²⁴ Just like Moses had promulgated the Torah to the Israelites so they would survive as a people, be part of God's promises and flourish as a nation, Jesus had directed his Gospel at each individual human being so he or she could change his or her ways, survive, fully evolve and attain eternal life, according to Saul. ¹²⁵ He taught that Jesus as a Jew, an Israelite, as a son of David and the Son of God was the bridge for all of mankind towards the true faith, away from the idols and towards a share in paradise. ¹²⁶ Saul was, however, aware of two inevitable facts. ¹²⁷ The Jews were divided over Jesus and his teachings and the rift was too deep for an imminent reconciliation. ¹²⁸ Yet the number of Gentiles who had adopted Jesus grew so fast that they virtually overwhelmed the Jewish membership.

¹²⁹ Therefore Saul decided to first of all devote his attention to the Gentiles. ¹³⁰ He took into account that the Jews would have to take a backseat for the time being, so Jesus' teachings would be proclaimed throughout the world to lead the earth to believe in the One God and assure everyone's salvation. ¹³¹ Saul did not view Jesus' teachings as competition to the Torah, but rather as instructions how Israel's Torah could be adapted to guide everybody's lives. ¹³² Even if hesitantly, some of Jesus' disciples agreed with his views. ¹³³ The original Church split into two factions which either adhered to Jesus' teaching or the teachings of his disciples. ¹³⁴ On the one side was the purely Jewish community in Jerusalem, Judea and Galilee which bowed to the authority of Kepha and Jacob, the provost. ¹³⁵ On the other the predominate communities of Gentiles which would soon be found everywhere in Asia, Greece and Rome. ¹³⁶ Saul physically and spiritually commuted between the two of them. ¹³⁷ Jesus' Jewish followers lived in perpetual strife with the traditional Jews and were persecuted by the High Council. ¹³⁸ Jesus' words spread extremely fast among the Jews in the diaspora as well as among foreign nations. ¹³⁹ Some of the Jews viewed this as outrageous blasphemy and a threat to the pure teachings of the Torah; for others it was a gift from God which had been announced in the Torah itself as the salvation for all peoples. ¹⁴⁰ A similar rift ensued among the scholars to that which had happened when the Torah had first been translated into Greek. ¹⁴¹ One was unsure of God's intended will and plan as God is always greater than human perceptions, regardless of how educated and wise some people may be. ¹⁴² This leaves the question of what consequences

all these events will have for Israel and its future. ¹⁴³ In brief, they were some of the events which occurred among the Jews at the time of the emperor Octavius, between the deaths of King Herod and Emperor Claudius. ¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, other groups in Israel, particularly the Zealots, have fuelled the tense relationship with Rome.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 2

¹ *O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble. ² They have left the dead bodies of your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild.*

³ Once the psalmist lamented Jerusalem's demise; now it is our task to describe the renewed destruction of the city and its Temple. ⁴ The catastrophe's details, gloated over by the heathens, are sufficiently well-known; we shall therefore not dwell on them. ⁵ The tales of horror spread by the victors shall also remain unmentioned in this chronicle. ⁶ Instead we prefer to direct our attention towards the causes of the devastating demolition and its consequences. ⁷ The sad fact is that the Temple is gone and Jerusalem lies in ruins. ⁸ It can not be denied that the disaster had been looming for quite some time. ⁹ Rome is a global power which behaves reliably and correctly in some instances, yet shows no mercy or understanding for the enslaved peoples' plight for freedom. ¹⁰ Under Roman rule the Jews were granted a minimum of freedom to observe their religious rites and the temple cult. ¹¹ From time to time, however, malicious Roman soldiers and the excesses of many a proconsul led to brutal encroachments in the punishment of unsympathetic Jews. ¹² On the other hand, the Jews also provoked the Romans and staged assaults and attempted uprisings. ¹³ Many a Jewish hothead and bigot was convinced that he could defy the biggest empire in the world, even defeat it and liberate Israel. ¹⁴ Among them individuals who were more concerned with personal fame and gain than freeing their fellow Jews. ¹⁵ In extreme cases their blind fervour escalated into a religious fanaticism no longer reconcilable with the Jewish faith which only played into the hands of Israel's enemies. ¹⁶ The Temple was increasingly being monopolised by rivalling groups until it was eventually occupied and desecrated while the moderates, eager to enter into negotiations, were simply shouted down or massacred.

¹⁷ Those developments inevitably led to dissolution, anarchy and violence. ¹⁸ And yet there had been signs of hope over the previous centuries when wise men, showing the Jewish people the way to a better future, had emerged. ¹⁹ First among

them to be mentioned should be Hillel. ²⁰ He was a renowned teacher of the Torah, a man of humility, peace and gentleness. ²¹ He endeavoured to lead the Israelites back to the Torah as the origin of their existence, to urge them to exercise patience, peace and altruism. ²² His compatriots only partly understood him and accepted him even less, especially the priesthood whose inadequacy he strongly admonished. ²³ As if he had anticipated the catastrophe, he did everything in his power to save the Torah and Israel's tradition from the imminent events to preserve them for future generations. ²⁴ Hillel was a passionate defender of loving God and one's fellow humans; a lone voice calling for peace and repentance.

²⁵ Jesus of Nazareth came after him without, however, being his successor. ²⁶ Jesus' teachings were essentially quite similar to Hillel's, but transcended Israel's concerns; they affected the personal sphere of every single human being. ²⁷ He paid particular attention to the devoted service to God and one's neighbour, to purity of heart and integrity of mind, forgiveness and loving one's enemy. ²⁸ He, too, was misunderstood and ended up on the cross. ²⁹ Just before the great catastrophe both he and Hillel already had notable successors. ³⁰ Yochanan ben Zakkai was one of Hillel's disciples who distinguished himself in the interpretation of the Torah and the implementation of the Pharisaic view of the Holy Scriptures as opposed to the Sadducaic. ³¹ He strived for compromise and reconciliation between the various Jewish groupings; his attempts to mediate between the Jews and the Romans, however, didn't yield any results worth mentioning. ³² He was well aware of the importance of the moment for Israel and the role he played therein. ³³ With God's help he succeeded in founding a new centre of Judaism in Jamnia, which was intended to save Jewish tradition and history from the threatening doom. ³⁴ This was his life's work. ³⁵ Various traditions were recorded in writing; the Torah and other holy scriptures newly evaluated and adjusted to the present, histories and doctrines gathered and reviewed. ³⁶ Thanks to the self-sacrificing work of Yochanan ben Zakkai and other scholars, generations to come would not grow up without knowing their roots.

³⁷ Another outstanding personality was Saul of Tarsus who later called himself Paul. ³⁸ Originally a Pharisee, he became the successor of Jesus of Nazareth. ³⁹ He excelled as an outstanding teacher. ⁴⁰ Under his leadership, Jesus' followers, or at least the majority of them, started to call themselves Christians. ⁴¹ Paul also reviewed the Holy Scriptures and to some extent redefined their interpretation to point to Jesus. ⁴² His knowledge and eloquence converted numerous Gentiles to the Christian communities. ⁴³ He familiarised himself with Jewish traditions and laws, but adhered, however, to his own interpretation. ⁴⁴ Just like Yochanan ben Zakkai, he advocated a peaceful solution for Jerusalem. ⁴⁵ Although he divided

many of the Jews through his teachings, the fate of his people was close to his heart. ⁴⁶ Many of his Jewish adherents believed that had he lived during the siege of Jerusalem, he would have certainly rushed into the temple to die there. ⁴⁷ Thus he would have completed what had still been missing from Jesus' suffering, namely to be slaughtered as a Passover lamb, which means to die in the Temple as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴⁸ In that case his words would have been literally fulfilled, namely that the temple would be superfluous as a place of sacrifice because Jesus would have been sacrificed once and for all and his offering would have replaced all animal sacrifices. ⁴⁹ But Paul was no longer alive at that stage and the Christians had already fled from the horrific events in Jerusalem. ⁵⁰ Some thus saved their lives only to be thrown to the wild beasts later on to amuse the Romans. ⁵¹ The Essenes also dispersed to all four corners of the globe. ⁵² A number of them changed over to the Pharisees, others sought refuge in the desert and others again attached themselves to the freedom fighters. ⁵³ As their way of life strongly resembled that of the Christians, it is not surprising that some of them joined the Christians. ⁵⁴ Here they found several teachings familiar to them, including Paul's call to celibacy which they also advocated. ⁵⁵ After the destruction of Jerusalem, the followers of Yochanan ben Zakkai and those of Jesus of Nazareth increasingly grew apart until they eventually became enemies. ⁵⁶ The animosity started with mutually blaming each other for the devastation of the Temple and ended with the exclusion from their respective communities and cursing each other. ⁵⁷ They did, however, still share one trait: the willingness to give their lives without hesitation for their beliefs and the glory of God, which they proved time and again in the Roman arenas. ⁵⁸ Both sides readily paid with their blood for the survival of the faith.

⁵⁹ At this point we shall elaborate somewhat on the Roman victors. ⁶⁰ During the long period of occupation they occasionally behaved correctly and benignly; following their last triumph over the Jews, however, they showed their true face. ⁶¹ They did not content themselves with their victory and the devastation they had caused. ⁶² Instead they thirsted for revenge and lusted after the gold and the Temple treasures which were the communal property of all the Jews. ⁶³ Thus they not only committed mass murder, they also plundered anything of value. ⁶⁴ Having laid waste to Jerusalem and Judea, they were proud of their atrocities. ⁶⁵ In Rome they held triumphal processions and adorned their columns and arches with the looted spoils and the treasures they had stolen from the LORD's Temple. ⁶⁶ Considering the Jewish question as having been conclusively solved, they were unconcerned about history judging them or the Jewish people seeking retaliation at a later stage. ⁶⁷ Now, they believed their gods to be without competition. ⁶⁸ Believed that the whole world would pay them homage, sacrifices and hail them. ⁶⁹ But they were

very much mistaken. ⁷⁰ To their horror, the remaining Jews and Christians rather died voluntarily than bow to the Roman idols. ⁷¹ The martyrs' blood streamed like a hymn of praise, tinted Rome's streets and squares dark red and declared: the Almighty, the God of Israel, lives and is glorified by his servants. ⁷² This blood testimony will persist for eternity, even when all trace of Rome and its emperors has vanished forever under the sun.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 3

¹ *We are objects of contempt to our neighbors, of scorn and derision to those around us.* ² *How long, LORD?*

³ Rome was convinced it had permanently solved the Jewish question. ⁴ The Romans falsely supposed they had destroyed the monotheistic Jewish people and that their gods were now without rival. ⁵ But some Jewish people would not be subdued and created upheaval. ⁶ When the Romans believed themselves to be save, war cries were heard everywhere out of the blue. ⁷ Be it in Judea or in the diaspora, one revolt after the next took place. ⁸ The Jewish nation had been wounded, but it had not been annihilated – not by far. ⁹ The Romans increasingly despaired over the amount of trouble caused by such a small, insignificant people. ¹⁰ The bitterness on both sides gradually turned to hatred. ¹¹ The resulting events have already been recorded by various historians. ¹² For that reason we shall firstly concern ourselves with the mental state of the Jewish nation; with its diverse movements. ¹³ The segregation of Jesus' Jewish followers created a never before experienced situation for Judaism. ¹⁴ Not only did their doctrine engender unrest and a split among their people, far more momentous was the fact that it also brought Gentiles to believe in Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁵ Thus the Jews forfeited their “exclusive right” to the Torah, the Jewish rites and traditions. ¹⁶ Suddenly Gentiles discussed sacred Jewish scriptures and the laws of the Torah and, although they did not adhere to them, they arrogantly presumed to understand and interpret them more effectively than the Jews themselves. ¹⁷ One may now perhaps assume that the Jews' popularity amongst the Gentiles had subsequently increased. ¹⁸ Unfortunately, just the opposite was the case. ¹⁹ To make this more comprehensible for the reader, we shall present the circumstances in an abbreviated and simplified fashion. ²⁰ At the time there were three groupings amongst the Jews which had next to nothing in common bar one characteristic: each of them was convinced that their objectives were the best for the Jewish people. ²¹ The first group to be mentioned at this point are the wise men, teachers from the school of Pharisees, guardians of the faith and the tradition, as well as

their adherents, a large silent majority of the Jews. ²² Their aim was to preserve the purity of the teachings at any price; to that end they created an increasing number of rules in an attempt to protect the Torah. ²³ In their view this was the best means to safeguard Israel's inheritance and the correct interpretation of the Torah. ²⁴ But, in fact, this removed them from the Torah itself as their regulations and interpretations increasingly became reactions to the teachings of the Sadducees, the Christians and the Essenes. ²⁵ Subsequently the content of their writings corresponded rather more to the Hellenistic than the Jewish mode of thought. ²⁶ Dissident Jews were excluded on principle, shunned and even cursed.

²⁷ The second grouping was the insurgents which, in turn, consisted of several sub-groups. ²⁸ The largest among them were those zealously defending the law and Israel as well as all those who were awaiting the Messiah; these also included adventurers and fanatics. ²⁹ The third group was represented by those Jews who adhered to the way and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. ³⁰ Their position was almost hopeless. ³¹ On the one hand they were cursed and excluded from the Synagogue by the other Jews, on the other, however, the Gentiles of the Christians regarded them first and foremost as Jews and therefore despised them. ³² Meanwhile the Gentile Christians have become an important factor. ³³ They are Greeks, Parthians, Romans, Egyptians and others who have adapted Paul of Tarsus' teachings and now follow Jesus of Nazareth. ³⁴ They disdain the traditional Jews, but do not endorse the Jewish Christians either. ³⁵ The reasons are manifold. ³⁶ In order to illustrate this, it is necessary to reach further back.

³⁷ After the Romans had crushed the Jewish revolt and destroyed Jerusalem, they repressed and harassed the Jews by whatever means and treated the Christians, whom they viewed as a Jewish sect, in the same manner. ³⁸ The Gentile Christians eventually did not tolerate this any more and gradually distanced themselves from Judaism or the Jewish Christians respectively. ³⁹ The situation was further aggravated by the Jews in the diaspora in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Cyprus and Mesopotamia where some Jewish leaders sadly wanted to demonstrate that the Jews could be as cruel, if not even more so, than the Romans. ⁴⁰ The more successful the uprisings, the more numerous the atrocities perpetrated against the Gentiles as well as the Christians. ⁴¹ This gave rise to a mounting outrage and hatred among the Gentile Christians towards everything associated with Judaism. ⁴² Events took an even more dramatic turn when Rabbi Akiva proclaimed the freedom fighter Simon bar Kokhba as the Messiah. ⁴³ The insurgents, led by bar Kokhba, murdered numerous Christians. ⁴⁴ At this point Rome had forbidden the Jews to practice circumcision and other traditions and the Jews partly held the Christians responsible for this. ⁴⁵ They accused the Jewish Christians of not having

supported the Jewish revolts. ⁴⁶ Apparently they had forgotten that, with the exception of Rabbi Akiva, the Jewish teachers and the devout among the people had also refrained from joining in the violence. ⁴⁷ The Jewish Christians countered that the uprisings had not been inspired by God and substantially harmed the Jewish people.

⁴⁸ The Jews viewed the Jewish Christians as traitors, the Gentile Christians as detractors complicit in their sufferings and the Gentiles as unlawful occupiers. ⁴⁹ In turn, the Gentile Christians considered the Jews to have murdered the Messiah and betrayed God while regarding the Jewish Christians as being undecided in their allegiance and the Gentiles as God's instrument to punish the Jews. ⁵⁰ The Jewish Christians felt wronged by the Jews and the Gentile Christians, but foremost by the Gentiles. ⁵¹ In the eyes of the Gentile rulers, however, all of them were useless and obstinate and created nothing but problems. ⁵² They treated them accordingly. ⁵³ In close intervals one atrocity followed the next in Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ Just as the rebuilding of the Temple and the city had commenced, Lucius Quintus erected statues to the Roman idols on the Temple Mount.

⁵⁵ An abomination of the sacred site. ⁵⁶ This should have been the moment for Jesus' followers to flee to the mountains. ⁵⁷ But there were no more of them in Jerusalem and only a few in Judea as they had already escaped earlier. ⁵⁸ Some Jewish Christians consider their hasty flight to be the reason that Jesus' teachings are not more widespread among the Jewish people. ⁵⁹ Following bar Kokhba's failed revolt, the Romans' raised Jerusalem to the ground. ⁶⁰ In its stead they built the city of Aelia Capitolina with its own temples and idol statues. ⁶¹ To humiliate the Jews even further, they renamed the province of Judea as Syria Palaestina after the Philistines, the Jews' former arch-enemies. ⁶² They could not bear that such a small nation's heroism had frequently defied a military global power such as Rome. ⁶³ For that reason they endeavoured to permanently erase the names of Jerusalem and Judea from history. ⁶⁴ Their plan was to destroy or otherwise eliminate anything even remotely connected to Judaism in order to erase the Jewish people by their roots. ⁶⁵ But they forgot that Israel was not just a small tribe at the edge of the desert – it was, in fact, God's personal charge, His elected people whom He would guard no matter how sinful. ⁶⁶ No power in this world can destroy His people because God has assured it of his Sonship until the end of time. ⁶⁷ And so far nobody has succeeded. ⁶⁸ God, the Creator, always has the last word after all. ⁶⁹ The Jews who survived the genocide were scattered all over the earth. ⁷⁰ As if God had sown his seed among all the different peoples to make His Torah, the rite of circumcision and the Sabbath prosper everywhere in the world. ⁷¹ But some

Christians also promulgated the Gospel and the interpretation of the Torah according to the Jew Jesus of Nazareth. ⁷² The world facing all its present trials and tribulations pays scant attention.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 4

¹ *Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. ² I will take refuge in your wings until the disaster has passed.*

³ Hadrian's successor Antoninus Pius rescinded the ban on circumcision and the Jews' position became somewhat more endurable as a result. ⁴ The Romans still persecute the Jews and the Christians, but more sporadically. ⁵ They are still heavily engaged in suppressing uprisings at various borders of the Empire. ⁶ In the west they have fortified their strongholds and erected barricades against possible attackers. ⁷ In the east they fight against the Parthians. ⁸ There are frequent wars against indigenous tribes at the northern frontiers. ⁹ All these prevent the Romans from systematically exterminating the Jews and the Christians. ¹⁰ Rome sent an army under the command of Lucius Verus to fight the Parthians in the east. ¹¹ The Parthians used every opportunity, be it a change of ruler or inner unrest in Rome, or any other disputes, to expand their territory at Rome's expense. ¹² Following three years of warfare, Lucius Verus and his troops succeeded in advancing as far as the Parthian twin capitals Seleucia-Ctesiphon. ¹³ They plundered the city and destroyed it to some extent. ¹⁴ A dangerous epidemic broke out in the burnt-down parts of the city. ¹⁵ Many Roman soldiers were infected. ¹⁶ Some of them died; others survived and spread the disease in Rome and the northern provinces.

¹⁷ The consequences were devastating for the entire empire. ¹⁸ Countless soldiers and peasants died, which badly affected the army's strength and the provision of the population. ¹⁹ Lucius Verus himself succumbed to the disease while marching north across the Alps to restore the peace in that region. ²⁰ He had had to abort the war against the Parthians as he and his legions had been ordered to arrest the progress of the rebellious tribes in the north. ²¹ He barely managed to celebrate his only partial victory against the Parthians as a triumph; soon after he was dead. ²² And while the Roman army was fighting the Marcomanni and other tribes, the Parthians regained their strength. ²³ In Rome, at that point, rivalling parties were fighting over the succession to the throne and the Parthians exploited the ensuing civil war to their advantage. ²⁴ Once Rome realised that they represented a serious threat, Septimius Severus summoned his troops. ²⁵ The Parthians were forced to retreat, but Septimius Severus, just like Lucius Verus before him, had to prematurely abandon the war. ²⁶ He took his troops back to Rome when he

believed his right to the throne was in jeopardy. ²⁷ There he defeated his rival Clodius Albinus. ²⁸ The throne now secured, he resumed his military campaign. ²⁹ He conquered the Parthian city of Ctesiphon. ³⁰ Thus he established a temporary peace at the empire's eastern frontier.

³¹ There was, however, unrest in the northern provinces of Raetia, Pannonia, Dacia and Noricum. ³² Despite the fortified border, the assailing tribes could no longer be held back. ³³ Marcomanni, Quadi, Iazyges and others were threatening the peace and were not willing to enter into negotiations. ³⁴ Rome fought several wars against them; there was no sign that the situation would stabilise. ³⁵ Even during the hostilities members of the invading tribes mixed with the indigenous population. ³⁶ The tangle of races and languages led to chaos in several regions. ³⁷ In the end it was impossible to tell who belonged to whom, who was fighting against whom.

³⁸ At the same time, however, there was also war on an entirely different front. ³⁹ Not a battle of arms, but a battle of words. ⁴⁰ The opponents were the Christians and the Jews, or, more correctly, the Gentile Christians and the Jews. ⁴¹ Both were also still occasionally persecuted and tortured to death by the Romans. ⁴² And both produced heroic defenders of their faith who rather volunteered to die than renounce God. ⁴³ Yet instead of helping each other, the enmity between them increased. ⁴⁴ The Christians issued more and more tracts in which the Jews were slandered and labelled as Jesus' murderers. ⁴⁵ Such accusations became particularly strong after the founding of a Christian school in Alexandria. ⁴⁶ It was modelled on the Gentile schools of philosophy. ⁴⁷ The founder was a certain Stoic by the name of Pantaenus. ⁴⁸ Gentiles who had converted to Christianity were tutored in Hellenistic thought and Greek philosophy. ⁴⁹ The Torah was read in the Greek translation, but newly interpreted; the new interpretation was an amalgamation of elements from the Pharisaic teachings and Greek philosophy interspersed with terminology from the world of pagan gods.

⁵⁰ Thus a new religion gradually emerged in which the authentic Jesus and his teachings only played a subordinate role. ⁵¹ Whenever Jesus was mentioned now, it sounded like he had not been a Jew from Nazareth but rather a Greek from Rome, Alexandria or Athens. ⁵² Initially the Jewish rabbis observed this development with grave concern, then with indignation, even panic. ⁵³ It was absolutely unacceptable for the Jewish scholars that people who had only recently sacrificed to idols now assumed to instruct the Jews, who owned the scriptures and a millennia-old tradition, in matters of the faith. ⁵⁴ Those self-proclaimed experts demanded that the Jews renounce circumcision, the Sabbath and much

more. ⁵⁵ They purported that this had been written in the Torah and the writings of the Prophets. ⁵⁶ They even claimed that God had disowned the Jews and that they, the Gentile Christians, were now God's chosen people. ⁵⁷ From now on, they claimed, all prophecies from the Holy Scriptures were applicable to them. ⁵⁸ As a proof for God's condemnation of Israel they cited the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jews. ⁵⁹ As if they had forgotten that the Temple had already been destroyed and the Jews had also lived in exile before without God deserting them.

⁶⁰ The Gentile Christians simply ignored the fact that Jesus had also been circumcised and had adhered to the Torah. ⁶¹ They related the circumcision to Moses on Mount Sinai although it was a distinct sign of God's eternal covenant with Abraham and his descendants. ⁶² Moreover, they alleged that the Jews were being persecuted as God's punishment for their sins; they never considered asking themselves the obvious question why they were being persecuted in the same way. ⁶³ From the Jews who followed Jesus' teachings they demanded they renounce the observance of the Torah and their Jewish traditions. ⁶⁴ Jesus' Jewish ancestry, his culture and real teachings were gradually obscured. ⁶⁵ Many a Gentile Christian fanatic and scholar thus diligently erected a wall between Jesus and his chosen people. ⁶⁶ A wall which would make it impossible for a Jew to follow Jesus and remain Jewish in the process. ⁶⁷ It was essentially another attempt to exterminate the Jewish people, this time through a new religious movement. ⁶⁸ It is only too understandable that the Jews devoted to God distanced themselves from the Christians, even cursed them. ⁶⁹ They recognised the shortcomings of the new religious philosophy which was based more on empty talk and lip service than obedience of the commandments. ⁷⁰ They blamed the Gentile Christians for the situation which had developed. ⁷¹ Outraged with the Christians, they also discarded Jesus and his teachings so weak-minded Jews would not be exposed to the danger of deserting the faith of their fathers. ⁷² For Christian fanatics this was a welcome opportunity to fuel the feud even further in order to induce a definite rift.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 5

¹ *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

² The Christian faith spreads like wildfire throughout the Roman Empire. ³ Even Emperor Severus is powerless to put a stop to it. ⁴ The hopeful tidings of the Kingdom of Heaven appeal to many people. ⁵ Oral tradition and the writings of his followers acquaint them with the life and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. ⁶ Many

Christian communities read the letters of Paul of Tarsus. ⁷ The thoughts of Christian philosophers are also disseminated. ⁸ One of them is Justinus, who has defined the divergences between the Christians and the Jews in his writings. ⁹ He has specified what a Christian in his opinion should and should not believe so the Christian would not be considered a Heretic. ¹⁰ This primarily relates to the Jewish Christians who, according to Justinus, should decide which side they belong to.

¹¹ In turn, such and similar Christian writings cause Jewish rabbis to also define the Jewish faith more precisely. ¹² The leading role is played by rabbis from the Pharisaic tradition. ¹³ This states that Moses did not only receive the Torah on Mount Sinai but also instructions for its interpretation. ¹⁴ Unlike the Sadducees, the Pharisees hold the view that the interpretation of the Torah should be aligned with societal development. ¹⁵ With the destruction of the Temple, the Sadducees not only lose their office; now they are also deemed to be heretics by the Pharisees. ¹⁶ Over time, different Jewish traditions of interpreting the Torah have developed which are now written down.

¹⁷ The Christians, too, create new gospels and scriptures addressing questions of the faith and providing directions for daily life. ¹⁸ Christian philosophers gradually start discussing the essence of God which frequently leads to controversy. ¹⁹ The doctrine of God's Word incarnate has long been known amongst the Jews. ²⁰ Now the rabbis fear that the Christians could correlate this with the person of Jesus of Nazareth. ²¹ They therefore strongly oppose the equalisation of the terms Memra and Logos. ²² The rabbis establish clear guidelines to mark the boundaries between Judaism and the Christian faith. ²³ Jewish and Christian religious leaders disparage each other and split the faithful into two hostile religious communities regardless of the fact that they all believe in the same God. ²⁴ After the death of the Roman bishop Zephyrinus, Callistus became his successor. ²⁵ He attempted to expand the competencies of the Bishop of Rome to include other Christian communities. ²⁶ This earned him the criticism of the scholar Tertullian. ²⁷ Callistus entered into heated arguments with Tertullian and Hippolytus which also included the penances associated with certain sins. ²⁸ Hippolytus, the bishop of a strict schismatic community, was excommunicated by Callistus. ²⁹ While Christians and Jews fought spiritual battles amongst and against each other, the Roman Empire also experienced internal power struggles.

³⁰ Following the death of Emperor Severus, his son Marcus Aurelius Severus claimed the throne. ³¹ After his beloved cloak, he was called by the moniker Caracalla. ³² He had his brother and co-regent Geta and several thousand of his supporters assassinated. ³³ All free citizens of the Roman Empire were granted

Roman citizenship under his reign. ³⁴ His power depended entirely on his army and he therefore considerably increased the soldiers' pay. ³⁵ When the empire found itself in financial difficulties, Caracalla conducted a currency reform. ³⁶ He was tolerant in religious matters in an effort to secure the favour of all the "gods". ³⁷ In his war against the Teutons he strengthened the Roman Empire's northern frontier. ³⁸ Fascinated by the deeds of the great Alexander, he then marched eastwards. ³⁹ After the death of the Parthian king Vologases, power struggles ensued between his sons which eventually escalated in a civil war. ⁴⁰ The victor was Artabanos whose daughter Caracalla intended to marry. ⁴¹ The Parthian king refused his consent and Caracalla proceeded to march into Mesopotamia without encountering any noteworthy resistance. ⁴² Before it came to a confrontation with the Parthians, however, Caracalla was murdered by his guard.

⁴³ The soldiers proclaimed the Praetorian prefect Macrinus as the new emperor. ⁴⁴ He made peace with the Parthians. ⁴⁵ Macrinus returned the spoils and the prisoners of war once taken by Caracalla to the Armenians and the Dacians. ⁴⁶ This, in turn, led to the army rebelling against Macrinus. ⁴⁷ Caracalla's mother used the opportunity to have her fourteen year old Syrian relative Varius Avitus declared Caracalla's illegitimate son. ⁴⁸ Subsequently Avitus was proclaimed emperor by a Gallic legion in Syria. ⁴⁹ The opponents met at the Battle of Antioch where Macrinus fled and was later arrested. ⁵⁰ Avitus adopted the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. ⁵¹ He was a descendant of a Syrian family of priests and himself a priest of the Syrian sun god. ⁵² Yet Antoninus Avitus was not received enthusiastically in Rome as he had the hated Caracalla celebrated. ⁵³ In Rome he introduced Syrian customs and endeavoured to place the Syrian sun god above the highest Roman deity. ⁵⁴ Avitus was murdered by insurgent Roman soldiers. ⁵⁵ His cousin, who assumed the name of Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander, succeeded him as emperor. ⁵⁶ He respected the Roman customs and his mother was friendly with the Christian theologian Origenes.

⁵⁷ The Parthian Empire unexpectedly underwent a complete change in direction. ⁵⁸ Thanks to Ardashir, the small tribe of the Sassanids assumed leadership of the Parthian Empire's southern regions in Persis. ⁵⁹ The Parthian king Artobonus could only proceed against the rebels from Persis after the Roman-Parthian peace treaty. ⁶⁰ He was defeated by Ardashir who subsequently had himself crowned as Great King in Ctesiphon. ⁶¹ Following further battles, Ardashir gradually conquered all the Parthian regions and thus founded the new Persian Sassanid Empire. ⁶² Only Armenia remained under the rule of a branch of the Arsacid Dynasty. ⁶³ Ardashir also attempted to conquer North Mesopotamia, but his battle against the Romans ended without a victor. ⁶⁴ The Roman Emperor Severus

Alexander had to interrupt his military campaign in the east in order to fight the Germanic tribes which had attacked the northern Roman provinces again. ⁶⁵ The weak emperor, very much influenced by his mother, was not respected by the soldiers and they murdered him near Mogontiacum. ⁶⁶ They then proclaimed General Maximinus as emperor. ⁶⁷ Now the Roman Empire simultaneously has several emperors. ⁶⁸ One of them is Marcus Julius Philippus who was elected by the army in the east. ⁶⁹ He comes from the Roman province of Arabia Petrae and is therefore the first Arabian Roman Emperor. ⁷⁰ Philippus and his legions defeated the Germanic tribes and defended the Empire's threatened northern frontier. ⁷¹ His religious policies towards the Jews and the Christians are tolerant. ⁷² But this is soon to change.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 6

¹ *But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.* ² *Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.* ³ The Roman Emperor Philippus appointed the prefect Decius as governor of Moesia and Pannonia. ⁴ These regions, constantly threatened by the Goths, experienced a military insurrection. ⁵ The soldiers proclaimed Decius as emperor. ⁶ During the subsequent civil war, Decius defeated Emperor Philippus in Verona. ⁷ Decius secured the support of the Senate. ⁸ He took over the rule of the Roman Empire. ⁹ His entire reign was dominated by his wars against the Goths. ¹⁰ They were one of the eastern Germanic tribes. ¹¹ The Germanic people consisted of various tribes with similar languages and mythologies. ¹² Although they actively traded with Rome, they successfully opposed the Empire's expansion. ¹³ The Romans interpreted their military failures as a sign of their gods' wrath. ¹⁴ More and more Roman citizens had gradually turned away from their traditional deities while various oriental cults had rapidly gained in popularity. ¹⁵ Emperor Decius, however, insisted on a uniform cult of the gods and the emperor. ¹⁶ He employed committees to oversee the attendance at sacrifices. ¹⁷ The Jews were exempt as their religion was tolerated. ¹⁸ The Christians did not enjoy the same privilege. ¹⁹ They therefore suffered terrible persecutions for their faith. ²⁰ Some of them escaped into the desert; others bribed officials to confirm their loyalty. ²¹ But a large number of Christians rather died than betray their beliefs. ²² The numerous martyrs included Fabian, the Bishop of Rome, Alexander, the Bishop of Jerusalem, and the theologian Origenes. ²³ Meanwhile, Germanic tribes led by the Goths invaded the Roman province of Dacia. ²⁴ From there they proceeded to the provinces of Moesia, Thracia and Illyricum. ²⁵ Decius died in his battle against

the Goths at Abritus. ²⁶ Trebonianus Gallus entered into a peace treaty with the Goths. ²⁷ The Goths went home with rich spoils and Rome was obliged to pay them an annual tribute. ²⁸ Due to several epidemics the population of the Roman Empire had been decimated. ²⁹ When the Romans failed to pay their yearly tribute, their conflict with the Goths flared up again. ³⁰ The Goths invaded the province of Macedonia and then Thessaloniki. ³¹ A large number of Franks crossed the north-western border into Gaul. ³² The Alemanni crossed the Alps and advanced on Italy. ³³ In the east the Roman Empire was under threat from the Sassanids. ³⁴ The Persians conquered Mesopotamia, Syria and the Armenian Kingdom. ³⁵ Emperor Valerian reclaimed the city of Antioch on the Orontes. ³⁶ Now the Christians were once more persecuted under his rule. ³⁷ The Roman and Carthaginian Bishops Sixtus and Cyprian were executed. ³⁸ Valerian appointed his son Gallienus as co-regent. ³⁹ When Valerian was later on arrested by the Persians, Gallienus reigned over the entire Roman Empire. ⁴⁰ In the west, the Germanic governor Marcus Cassianus Postumus rebelled against him. ⁴¹ Postumus usurped the provinces of Gallia, Britannia and Hispania. ⁴² He made Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium the capital with its own Senate and introduced his own currencies. ⁴³ He also successfully defended this new Gallic Empire against the Germanic tribes. ⁴⁴ In the east the Roman army recaptured Mesopotamia from the Sassanids. ⁴⁵ Rome also reinstated order in the rebellious province of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Emperor Gallienus put an end to the persecutions of the Christians and bestowed the same legal status as the Jews on the Christian community. ⁴⁷ This was partly attributable to the diplomatic talents of the new Roman Bishop Dionysius. ⁴⁸ He also endeavoured to reorganise the Roman Church administration and to establish relationships with other Christian communities. ⁴⁹ Dionysius fought against heresies and convened a Synod which condemned Sabellianism and Subordinationism. ⁵⁰ At a Synod in Antioch the local bishop, Paul of Samosata, was removed from his office because he claimed that Jesus had just been a human being and not a manifestation of God. ⁵¹ Emperor Gallienus' attempts to reconquer the western provinces were futile. ⁵² He did, however, succeed in halting the Goths' progress towards Mesopotamia. ⁵³ Gallienus was murdered at Mediolanum. ⁵⁴ The Gallic Emperor Postumus was also killed after an army revolt. ⁵⁵ The next Roman emperor, Aurelianus, reunited the disintegrated empire. ⁵⁶ Aurelianus supported the cult of the sun god whose main festivities were celebrated three days after the winter solstice. ⁵⁷ This sun cult was similar to the cult of Mithras which was also widespread in the Roman Empire. ⁵⁸ Manichaeism, too, had gained a foothold under the Romans. ⁵⁹ The teachings of the Persian Mani united elements of Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. ⁶⁰ The Sassanid

king Bahram had him executed and banned his teachings. ⁶¹ Bahram's sons incited a civil war in the Sassanid Empire. ⁶² The Roman Emperor Carus exploited the situation to capture the Persian Capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon. ⁶³ His successor Diocletian instigated major reforms in the Roman Empire. ⁶⁴ He appointed his friend Maximian as co-regent and conferred the responsibility for the western part of the Empire to him. ⁶⁵ Diocletian and Maximian appointed Constantius and Galerius as Junior Emperors. ⁶⁶ They were put in charge of guarding several regions and considered to be the successors of the Emperors. ⁶⁷ Rome formally remained the capital of the Empire. ⁶⁸ The emperors and the junior emperors built other cities into their government seats. ⁶⁹ The Empire was divided into four domains. ⁷⁰ In the east they had to fight against the Persian king. ⁷¹ Diocletian negotiated a peace treaty with the Sassanids which was advantageous for Rome. ⁷² Then he announced his intention to thoroughly reform the Empire.

Part TWO

CHAPTER 7

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ² For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

³ Thanks to the reforms, Diocletian succeeded in leading the Empire out of the crisis. ⁴ Having reformed his realm, appointed his co-regents and strengthened the administration of the provinces, he turned his attention to the renewal of the cult of the gods and the emperor. ⁵ He enforced sacrifices to the Roman deities, insisted that the emperor be revered as a god and revived old heathen practices. ⁶ The Jews and the Christians did not fit into his plans. ⁷ Not because they incited the crowds to revolts and uprisings. ⁸ No, they merely refused to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods because they considered them to be nothing but idols. ⁹ As the Jews were widespread and not very numerous, Diocletian's anger was mainly directed at the Christians. ¹⁰ The Christians' following steadily increased and they had already become a substantial religious community. ¹¹ Diocletian and his junior emperor ordered the destruction of Christian places of worship and the burning of Christian scriptures. ¹² Moreover, Diocletian intended to have all Christian bishops, provosts and priests arrested and tortured. ¹³ The death penalty was imposed on those who refused to make sacrifices to the emperor. ¹⁴ Christians and some Jews were incarcerated, consigned to the mines and executed. ¹⁵ The only reason was their loyalty to the One True God. ¹⁶ Christians and Jews had much in common regarding their faithfulness to God and their rejection of the imperial cult. ¹⁷ Despite those similarities, they did not connect. ¹⁸ In fact, the opposite

happened; the more time elapsed, the more hostile they behaved towards each other. ¹⁹ Accusations, taunts and verbal abuse flowed freely; the Christians being even more acrimonious than the Jews. ²⁰ Such was the atmosphere when the bishops and priests from the western regions held a meeting. ²¹ They tried to agree on a mutual stance against the pagans. ²² But they also drafted decrees against the Jews and a co-existence with them. ²³ According to these decrees Christians were not allowed to marry Jews, break bread with them and have crops blessed by them. ²⁴ Up to that point the cohabitation of Christians and Jews, especially in the provinces, had been harmonious, at least not hostile. ²⁵ The above mentioned decrees put a stop to that.

²⁶ Now back to Emperor Diocletian and his successor Galerius. ²⁷ After Diocletian's retirement Galerius instigated massive Christian persecutions. ²⁸ But then he became seriously ill. ²⁹ Apparently his condition changed his mind. ³⁰ More or less on his deathbed, he issued an edict to end the persecution of the Christians. ³¹ But his contemporaries were even more amazed by the fact that he had commended himself and the realm to the prayers of the Christians. ³² This ushered in a long period of relief for the Christians from which the Jews also profited. ³³ The Christian communities quickly recovered and rapidly grew as the Emperor's sickness and death was interpreted as God's intervention on their behalf.

³⁴ Galerius' death was followed by struggles for the succession. ³⁵ Constantine emerged as the victor. ³⁶ He was particularly sympathetic towards Christianity. ³⁷ It can be assumed that this was due to his legendary defeat of his rival Maxentius at the Tiber near Rome. ³⁸ He attributed his victory to a revelation that he would win under the sign of the Christian symbol of the cross. ³⁹ He now hoped to remain victorious forever if he converted to Christianity. ⁴⁰ Many of his advisors encouraged his opinion. ⁴¹ Thus the pagan emperor started to sympathise with Christianity and to favour it. ⁴² The Christians enjoyed and rejoiced in their newly won freedom. ⁴³ But soon provosts, philosophers and bishops emerged who dampened the joy through their doctrines and obscured the teachings of the Torah and the gospels. ⁴⁴ Just as the Christians had finally gained the freedom to freely profess to their faith in God and Jesus, they had to be afraid of their own fellow believers; there were serious consequences for those who did not "correctly" phrase their faith or did not carry the "correct" perception of God and Jesus in their hearts. ⁴⁵ The more the Christians fought amongst each other, the more resolutely the Emperor demanded unity in matters of the faith. ⁴⁶ As a heathen he could obviously not understand that God is greater than any perception of Him and that every Christian has his own portal to God through Jesus of Nazareth.

47 But sadly neither did the bishops who strived to expand their authority and power in the newly acquired freedom by imposing their own ideas and doctrines on the believers. 48 The change from humble slave mentality to that of arrogant patriarch was rapid. 49 Thus it was no longer important how one conducted one's life, handed out alms, turned the other cheek and loved one's neighbour; what now mattered were some fallacious terms for God, gods, faith and truth. 50 Tempers flared and hatred was nourished instead of unity; a rift was inevitable. 51 But the pagan Emperor Constantine would not tolerate the situation. 52 He convened a meeting of the bishops, imposed a profession of faith on them, deposed the non-submissive and exiled them. 53 In practise everything that was promulgated as the Torah and the gospels was treated with contempt; their behaviour started to resemble that of the heathens, their malice even exceeded it. 54 Radical innovations were introduced to Christianity, intended to make it impossible for the Jews to voluntarily accept that faith. 55 The Sabbath was abolished and Sunday established as the day of rest. 56 The Easter festival was separated from Passover and moved to another day of the week. 57 The Jewish calendar was replaced by the solar calendar. 58 Jesus of Nazareth's birth was now celebrated according to the new calendar. 59 Christianity was declared as the state religion. 60 Emperor Constantine was baptised shortly before his death. 61 His mother Helena had Christian churches built in Jerusalem.

62 After Constantine's death his son Constantius actively promoted Christianity. 63 Many clerics succumbed to the temptations the new popularity of Christianity brought with it. 64 The priests abuse the newly acquired influence, enrich themselves and descend into a pagan way of life. 65 A vast majority of the Christians is appalled but unable to stop the developments. 66 The official Church removes itself more and more from the apostolic way of life and becomes increasingly anti-Semitic. 67 Those among the Christians who strive for a renewal of and a return to the gospels are ignored and even ostracised from the Church. 68 Although an ever-greater part of the Christians adheres to the teachings and claims of Jesus, the outward appearance of the Church and the clergy presents an entirely different picture. 69 The structure of the Church hierarchy conforms to the political structures of the Roman Empire; the code of deference orients itself on the imperial cult. 70 A liturgy, far more reminiscent of an imperial court ceremony than of Jesus' Last Supper, was invented. 71 The Jews were ever more frequently demonised as having committed deicide. 72 It seems as if the newly emerging leaders of Christianity want to eliminate the Jews so they would not be reminded of Jesus the Jew and his way of life.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 1

1 If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. 2 But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend...

3 Just like foaming ocean waves crashing against the shore, foreign peoples and tribes collide with the borders of the established realms. 4 Franks and Alemanni occupied parts of the Roman Empire while the Xionites emerged at the northern frontier of the Persian Empire. 5 Moreover, the Roman Empire experiences internal strife. 6 During the Battle of Mursa, Constantius defeated the usurper Magnentius. 7 After the final victory over Magnentius at Mons Seleucus, Constantius ruled over the entire Roman Empire. 8 He actively participated in the conflict over the correct Christian creed and effected the banishment of Athanasius. 9 Christian circles experienced controversies between the supporters of Arius and those of Athanasius. 10 Constantius, however, had to defend the realm from the invading tribes. 11 He defeated the Alemanni and entered into a peace treaty with them, yet was unable to completely calm the situation. 12 On his orders, his possible rival for the imperial title, Constantius Gallus, was executed. 13 He installed the general Julian as Caesar in the western part of the empire. 14 Soon after the troops in Gaul rebelled against Constantius and proclaimed Julian as the new emperor. 15 Constantius unexpectedly died before the situation could escalate into a battle between his and Julian's troops.

16 Julian was now the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire. 17 He issued an edict to rescind the banishment of the Christian scholars. 18 Thus Athanasius was allowed to return as bishop to Alexandria. 19 In that city Athanasius convened a council to proceed against Arianism. 20 Emperor Julian distanced himself from Christianity and began to support paganism. 21 His benign attitude towards the Jews raised much hope among the dispersed people. 22 He even planned to rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. 23 His actions encouraged and induced some Jews to violently act against the Christians. 24 Their hostile stance became deeply imprinted in the Christians' memory and they thirsted for revenge. 25 But Emperor Julian, famed as a philosopher and general, died prematurely in battle against the Persians. 26 His sudden death meant the end of the Jewish dreams and a gradual demise of paganism and its rituals. 27 As there was no successor from Constantius' family, a Christian officer by the name of Jovian was declared emperor. 28 The Christians now started to gain the upper hand in the Roman Empire. 29 They used this to deliver the deathblow to paganism and to harass the Jews; they also fought amongst each other over matters of the faith. 30 Thus the hunted once again became the hunters, and not the most considerate. 31 With regards to Christianity, a man of faith and the mission, however, must also be mentioned. 32 This was the Goth

Bishop Wulfila. ³³ He endeavoured to make God's Word accessible to the faithful. ³⁴ In order to translate the Bible into Gothic, he invented a new alphabet. ³⁵ Thus he enabled the spread of God's Word among foreign tribes and peoples. ³⁶ This was of great importance for their Christianisation. ³⁷ A certain Hieronymus also translated the Bible, this time into Latin. ³⁸ To that end, he even moved to Judea. ³⁹ The LORD always finds ways and means to send His Word into the world. ⁴⁰ It is apparent that all of the earth is supposed to be suffused with the knowledge of God. ⁴¹ Currently it is the Christians of the Roman Empire who most further this undertaking. ⁴² Unfortunately this also includes some deplorable acts; but more about this later.

⁴³ Let us now turn our attention to the secular ruler of the Roman Empire. ⁴⁴ Emperor Jovian made his peace with the Persians and relinquished five provinces to them. ⁴⁵ He, too, died unexpectedly just a year after taking the throne. ⁴⁶ Valentinian was proclaimed as his successor. ⁴⁷ Shortly after his accession he appointed his brother Valens as co-regent. ⁴⁸ At that time the safety of the Roman Empire was in jeopardy. ⁴⁹ The frontiers saw ever more altercations with invading tribes. ⁵⁰ Simultaneously, a mental battle between rivalling Christian movements occurred in the inner realm. ⁵¹ This battle frequently resorted to very profane means. ⁵² As such the removal from office and the banishment of dissidents were the order of the day. ⁵³ Following several synods and councils a certain direction of Christianity gradually became more dominant. ⁵⁴ Little by little the Arians were overruled, exiled and declared to be heretics. ⁵⁵ Other Christian groupings, which refused to accept the so-called Athanasian Creed, experienced the same fate. ⁵⁶ At the Council of Constantinople Christianity was once and for all defined as a Trinitarian doctrine and declared as the official State religion by authority of the emperor. ⁵⁷ Emperor Theodosius, together with Gratian and Valentinian, issued an edict stipulating the compulsory religious orientation of Christianity. ⁵⁸ Ever since Christians of a different persuasion have been labelled as heretics; the pagans and the Jews also lost their status. ⁵⁹ The more the Christians consolidate their power, the more blatantly they show another face than that they have displayed for the previous two hundred years. ⁶⁰ The victims are the dissident Christians, the pagans and most of all the Jews. ⁶¹ Apparently the Christians have forgotten that they owe everything which constitutes Christianity exclusively to the Jews: the Bible, the Word and the Body of Christ. ⁶² They show no gratitude whatsoever and are hostile towards the Jews; they slander and persecute them and call them the root of all evil. ⁶³ The Holy Bible is ludicrously interpreted in a way detrimental to the Jews, thereby nearly conveying the impression that Jesus' tempter in the desert was personally responsible. ⁶⁴ At this time there are many learned men amongst the Christians: Ambrosius, John, Hieronymus and Augustinus. ⁶⁵ But none of them

supports the Jewish cause; none of them comes to their defence, none of them is prepared to be their advocate. ⁶⁶ Some of the bishops even incite their faithful to banish the Jews, destroy their synagogues and loot or destroy their possessions. ⁶⁷ Others prevent the emperor from redressing the injustices and making reparations. ⁶⁸ Three hundred and fifty years earlier the Jewish mob, spurred on by the Temple priests, demanded that Jesus the Jew be crucified. ⁶⁹ Now the Christian rabble, incited by many a bishop, screams: “Destroy the Jew, exile him and burn his synagogue!” ⁷⁰ Due to Pilate’s unlawful verdict innocent Jewish blood for the redemption of mankind from the power of darkness was shed in the past. ⁷¹ Now more innocent Jewish blood is shed in many parts of the empire. ⁷² May the LORD accept this as a pledge for a better, devout and peaceful future of the world.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 2

¹ *Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my God.* ² *Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.* ³ The Western Roman Empire is increasingly threatened. ⁴ The Huns’ invasions had cleared the path into the realm for other invaders. ⁵ And while various provinces are overrun by Barbarians, there are also usurpations by indigenous tribal leaders. ⁶ The Roman administration was forced to relocate to safer regions. ⁷ From Mediolanum the Romans moved to Ravenna and from Teveris to Arles. ⁸ Emperor Flavius Honorius tried to save what he could. ⁹ As he was not a talented strategist, his opponent, the Goth leader Alaric, did not find it particularly difficult to excel in his military campaigns. ¹⁰ After his army had plundered Rome, his ambitions grew. ¹¹ His plan was to conquer the Roman province of Africa. ¹² But he died on route. ¹³ The Goths now marched from Italy to southern Gaul. ¹⁴ Their leader was Ataulf, brother-in-law of the deceased Alaric. ¹⁵ The emperor Honorius eventually succeeded to win over the Goths as foederati. ¹⁶ They were granted the region surrounding Tolosa where the Tolosan Empire, ruled by King Theodoric, was founded. ¹⁷ The West-Roman general Constantius was declared co-regent of the childless Honorius. ¹⁸ The East-Roman emperor Theodosius, however, refused to recognise Constantius. ¹⁹ Constantius died seven months into his reign and the West-Roman Empire experienced yet another crisis.

²⁰ In the meantime there was political and ecclesiastical unrest in the East-Roman capital Constantinople. ²¹ The archbishop was John of Antioch who he was a skilled orator. ²² His sermons were extremely anti-Semitic; not even the Jewish

Christians escaped his wrath. ²³ John supported the followers of Origen, whose writings the Church had banned. ²⁴ Following an argument with the mother of the young Theodosius, he was deposed as archbishop of Constantinople. ²⁵ This led to riots in the city during which the Megale Ekklesia was burned down. ²⁶ To protect the sprawling city of Constantinople from the Huns, Emperor Theodosius had a new wall erected. ²⁷ He closed down the Temple of Zeus in Olympia and officially outlawed the Olympic Games, just as his grandfather of the same name had done before him. ²⁸ Theodosius issued numerous new laws, some of them anti-Jewish although Judaism was a recognised religion. ²⁹ Mixed marriages with Jews were not permitted and baptised children were given priority in matters of inheritance. ³⁰ A further law prohibited Jews from keeping slaves as these were frequently forced to get circumcised. ³¹ Theodosius also forbade the building of new synagogues; later he legalised the conversion of synagogues into churches. ³² The Jewish patriarch Gamaliel was removed from office. ³³ The patriarch tax was converted into an imperial tax and the office of the Sanhedrin officially abolished.

³⁴ The anti-Semitic laws motivated the monk Barsauma of Samosata to act in a rather unchristian manner. ³⁵ He roamed through the Roman province of Palestine with his militant followers, demolished synagogues and drove the Jews out of Jerusalem. ³⁶ Jerusalem and Eretz Israel became the destination for many Christian pilgrims. ³⁷ Theodosius wife, Empress Eudocia, was among them and brought the relics of the martyr Stephen to Constantinople. ³⁸ Theodosius had Eudocia's support when he built the Christian University in Constantinople where the lecturers were only permitted to teach under state supervision. ³⁹ In this university a statute book was created which contained every law issued since Constantine's time up to Theodosius in chronological order. ⁴⁰ The so-called Codex Theodosianus was also adopted by the West-Roman Empire. ⁴¹ There Valentinian, the six-year-old son of the deceased Constantius, became emperor. ⁴² Valentinian married Theodosius' daughter and relocated from Ravenna back to Rome.

⁴³ Christians were persecuted in parts of the Sassanid Empire after Bishop Abdas of Susa had ordered the destruction of a Zoroastrian temple. ⁴⁴ A new war broke out between Rome and Persia which Theodosius and Bahram ended with a peace treaty and an agreement of mutual religious tolerance. ⁴⁵ Rome had to make tribute payments to the Persians for the protection of the Caucasus mountain range against a possible invasion by the Huns. ⁴⁶ The Jews in Mesopotamia took the Persians' side during the Roman-Persian war. ⁴⁷ They did, however, frequently come into conflict with the Zoroastrian priests. ⁴⁸ Yet the religious life flourished in their communities. ⁴⁹ Their spiritual centres in Sura and Pumbedita also

experienced an upturn. ⁵⁰ In the West-Roman Empire the destruction of synagogues has been prohibited for some time now. ⁵¹ The Christian theologian Augustine of Hippo emphasises the importance of the Jews in God's Divine Plan of Salvation. ⁵² He maintains that Christian rulers should protect the Jewish communities so their example will show Christianity's superiority. ⁵³ Another theologian, Hieronymus, on the other hand, is determined to destroy Judaism. ⁵⁴ In Bethlehem he translated the Tanakh, which the Church calls the Old Testament, into Latin. ⁵⁵ The already canonised New Testament he translated into a more customary Latin based on the existing *Vetus Latina*. ⁵⁶ Hieronymus also translated and revised the second book of the Chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea, a historical overview from the Creation up to Christianity as a permitted religion.

⁵⁷ Meanwhile the East-Roman emperor Theodosius had convened the Church Council of Ephesus. ⁵⁸ The doctrine of Nestorius, the archbishop of Constantinople, about Jesus' dual nature was rejected; Mary was declared to be "the Mother of God". ⁵⁹ Pelagianism, which dismissed the concept of Original Sin, was judged to be heretical. ⁶⁰ The Nestorian Church in East Syria did not accept the Council's decrees and separated itself. ⁶¹ Thus not even the emperor was able to establish religious unity throughout the Roman Empire. ⁶² In his later years Theodosius sympathised with Monophysitism. ⁶³ This doctrine, which only affirms Jesus' divine and not his human nature, was enforced at a further Council. ⁶⁴ Many Church leaders disagreed and another schism occurred. ⁶⁵ The Roman bishop Leo called this synod a "Robber Council". ⁶⁶ On Emperor Theodosius' death Marcian succeeded him. ⁶⁷ The Vandals conquered Carthage and soon ruled over the entire province of Africa. ⁶⁸ The major part of Hispania fell under the control of the Suebi. ⁶⁹ The Anglo-Saxons became the rulers of Britannia. ⁷⁰ Only Gaul is being successfully defended from the expansion of the Visigoths, the Franks and the Burgundians by the Roman general Aetius. ⁷¹ As a result of the mass migration of peoples the western part of the empire under the reign of Valentinian keeps disintegrating more and more. ⁷² The future does not seem very auspicious.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 3

¹ *Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.*

² The empire of the Huns gained strength and bordered on both parts of the Roman Empire. ³ Attila fought against the East-Roman Empire, primarily because of the non-payment of the peace tribute. ⁴ There were also more frequent conflicts

between the Huns and West-Rome. ⁵ In the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains the Roman general Aetius, supported by the Visigoths, defeated the Huns. ⁶ The Visigoth king Theodoric died in the battle and Thorismund became his successor. ⁷ Attila once again attacked Northern Italy and prepared to march against Rome. ⁸ The East-Roman onslaughts and a plague epidemic, however, put a stop to his plans. ⁹ Some are of the opinion that Rome was saved due to Attila's meeting with the Roman bishop Leo.¹⁰ After Attila's death his empire lost its strength and the hitherto oppressed Germanic tribes took over the rule of the region.

¹¹ A new council was held in Chalcedon. ¹² About six hundred bishops attended. ¹³ The longstanding dispute over Jesus' divine and his human nature was finally settled. ¹⁴ The Trinity was declared as dogma. ¹⁵ The Churches of Egypt, Palestine and Syria disagreed with the wording. ¹⁶ Thus the ancient eastern Churches also seceded. ¹⁷ They viewed the Council's decisions as a return to Nestorianism. ¹⁸ The West-Syrian as well as the Egyptian Copts believed the divine and the human nature of Jesus to be one. ¹⁹ The East-Syrians had already separated from the imperial Church at an earlier stage. ²⁰ Besides the wording of the Creed, the Council also discussed other issues. ²¹ One of them was the monasticism widespread in the east. ²² There were stylites in Syria and wandering monks as well as monastic communities in Egypt which relate to Pachomius. ²³ In the west, even later on as a bishop, Martin of Tours lived in a hermitage outside the city. ²⁴ In the east, monks gradually settled in the cities and often behaved in an undisciplined manner. ²⁵ The monasteries were therefore placed under the control of the local bishops; the monks were no longer allowed to leave their monasteries at will. ²⁶ All told the Council of Chalcedon concerned itself with twenty eight canons, the last of them becoming a stumbling block for the imperial Church. ²⁷ According to this the bishops of Rome and Constantinople were due the same honours. ²⁸ The Roman bishop Leo strongly opposed this; he insisted on Rome's primacy and cited the founding of the Roman community by the Apostles as the reason. ²⁹ Emperor Marcian, however, confirmed all the Council's decisions for political reasons.

³⁰ After the violent death of the West-Roman emperor Valentinian, Rome descended into chaos. ³¹ The Vandals exploited the situation to plunder Rome. ³² On behalf of Rome the Visigoth king Theodoric, the son of Thorismund, fought against the Suebi and prevented their further invasion into Hispania. ³³ Inside the West-Roman Empire emperors quickly changed succession, thereby destabilising the realm. ³⁴ In the east, General Flavius Valerius Leo was proclaimed as emperor and crowned by the Patriarch of Constantinople. ³⁵ Leo then ordered the unsuccessful joined fleet operation of East- and West-Rome against the Vandals.

³⁶ The Visigoth king Theodoric was assassinated by his brother Euric. ³⁷ Another Theodoric, who had united the Goth tribes, assumed the Ostrogoths' regency. ³⁸ After the alliance with the Goths in Thrace, the Ostrogoths represented a serious threat to Constantinople. ³⁹ A general from Isauria, who had adopted the Greek name Zeno, took the imperial throne. ⁴⁰ Zeno successfully stabilised the East-Roman Empire through diplomacy. ⁴¹ He dispatched a delegation to Carthage which proclaimed the Vandal king Genseric as the independent ruler of Africa. ⁴² Thus the Vandals' piracy gradually abated.

⁴³ During a military coup in the west, the Germanic general Odoacer deposed the West-Roman emperor Romulus. ⁴⁴ Zeno, not very concerned about the fate of the West-Roman Empire, acknowledged Odoacer as the ruler of Italy. ⁴⁵ But Odoacer wanted more: he leased Sicily from the Vandals and conquered Dalmatia. ⁴⁶ The emperor Zeno first sent the Rugii to oppose them and then the Ostrogoths after the Rugii had failed. ⁴⁷ Thus Zeno rid himself of the dangerous Ostrogoth king Theodoric. ⁴⁸ The persecutions of the pagan philosophers in Alexandria started with Zeno's ecclesiastical politics. ⁴⁹ He endeavoured to reintegrate the Egyptian Monophysite Church into the Church of Constantinople. ⁵⁰ To this end a compromise was sought whereby the Council's controversial decisions were simply going to be ignored. ⁵¹ Thereupon the Roman bishop Felix excommunicated Acacius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. ⁵² The Theodosian anti-Semitic laws were also used against the Samaritans. ⁵³ This instigated an uprising in Samaria during which several Christian communities were exterminated. ⁵⁴ After the rebellion had been suppressed, Emperor Zeno had the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim converted into a Christian church.

⁵⁵ The Vandal king Huneric, son of Genseric, convened a Christian Council in Carthage where it was decided that only the Arian version of the Christian faith was permitted. ⁵⁶ Subsequently numerous traditional Christians, orthodox as well as Catholic Christians, lost the lives. ⁵⁷ Armenia, the first country to have declared Christianity as its state religion, also underwent changes regarding the Church and politics. ⁵⁸ After the Roman-Persian wars a large part of Armenia was governed by the Persians. ⁵⁹ The Persian king Yazdegerd oppressed the Armenian Christians. ⁶⁰ He endeavoured to introduce Zoroastrianism to the entire Persian Empire and defeated the Christian Armenian nobility at the Battle of Avarayr. ⁶¹ Nonetheless, the Armenians retained their Christian identity. ⁶² At the Synod of Beth-Lapat the Nestorian doctrine was declared as obligatory. ⁶³ The Visigoths crushed the Frankish tribes in Gaul. ⁶⁴ The tide turned, however, when the Merovingian Clovis became the ruler of the Franks. ⁶⁵ Clovis defeated the Roman military commander Syagrius in Gaul and founded the Kingdom of the Franks. ⁶⁶ The Ostrogoths,

under the command of Theodoric, were victorious in Italy and killed Odoacer in Ravenna. ⁶⁷ Anastasius succeeded Emperor Zeno on the Byzantian throne. ⁶⁸ For that reason Gelasius, the Bishop of Rome, sent the emperor a letter in which he emphasised his superior authority in religious matters. ⁶⁹ Gelasius introduced the Feast of Candlemas which was called the Feast of the Presentation in the east. ⁷⁰ Emperor Anastasius confirmed the Ostrogoth king Theodoric as the ruler of Italy. ⁷¹ Clovis, the King of the Franks, was baptised by Bishop Remigius. ⁷² Unlike other Germanic rulers he accepted the Catholic rather than the Arian form of Christianity.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 4

¹ *The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*
² Following the fall of the West-Roman Empire, the eastern part of the realm stabilised and became a major power called East-Rome or Byzantium. ³ The East-Roman emperor governed large regions of Pannonia and Asia Minor as far Egypt as well as parts of Mesopotamia. ⁴ After sixty years of peace a military conflict developed between Emperor Anastasius and the Persian king Kavadh. ⁵ Following a ceasefire Anastasius had a fortress built in Dara at the Syrian-Persian border. ⁶ The kings of the newly established western realms pretended to submit themselves to the rule of the East-Roman Caesar; in reality, however, they ruled autonomously. ⁷ The Ostrogoth king Theodoric wanted to unite the Germanic tribes to which end he also used marriage politics. ⁸ He wed his daughters to Visigoth and Burgundian heirs to the throne; his sister married into the Vandal Dynasty. ⁹ Theodoric himself took the Frankish king Clovis' sister as his wife. ¹⁰ But once Clovis converted to Catholicism, Theodoric's plan of a Germanic alliance based on Arianism became obsolete. ¹¹ Clovis defeated the Alemanni and the Thuringians and marched against the Visigoths. ¹² He designated Paris as the capital of the Frankish Empire instead of Soissons. ¹³ Emperor Anastasius bestowed the title of Honorary Consul on Clovis. ¹⁴ After the Visigoth king Alaric had died in battle against Clovis, Theodoric publicly opposed Clovis' expansion of his realm. ¹⁵ The Gallic part of the Visigoths' empire was ruled by the Franks. ¹⁶ As the guardian of the Emperor, Theodoric also took over the rule over the Visigoths. ¹⁷ His dominion extended from Pannonia to Hispania. ¹⁸ When Clovis died, the Frankish Empire was divided between his four sons who founded the kingdoms of Paris, Soissons, Reims and Orleans. ¹⁹ In Byzantium the new emperor Justin took the throne. ²⁰ He relied on his diplomatic skills and strived to end the Church schism which had resulted from differing creeds. ²¹ To the Monophysites'

detriment he adopted the creed of the Roman bishop Hormisdas. ²² This ushered in a new wave of persecution of the Arians in the east. ²³ The Goth king Theodoric therefore dispatched John, the new Bishop of Rome, to Constantinople. ²⁴ Because John did not fulfil all of Theodoric's demands he was arrested in Ravenna and died soon after. ²⁵ During the same year Theodoric, who was overall regarded as a tolerant ruler in questions of religion, also died. ²⁶ He respected the Jewish faith and ordered the Christians in Ravenna to rebuild the synagogue they had burned down.

²⁷ In Byzantium Justinian succeeded his uncle Justin as the emperor of East-Rome. ²⁸ Right from the start of his reign he energetically fought for a united Roman Empire. ²⁹ Thus the Codex Justinianus was created a hundred years after the Codex Theodosianus. ³⁰ The new laws also incorporated strict anti-Semitic rules. ³¹ The Jews were not permitted to employ Christians as workers and slaves, thereby making it impossible for them to engage in farming. ³² The Second Council of Orleans prohibited marriage between Jews and Christians in the Frankish realm. ³³ A further council threatened the excommunication of Christians who broke bread with Jews. ³⁴ Christians were not allowed to meet with Jews during Holy Week. ³⁵ The subsequent Samaritan revolt under the leadership of Julianus ben Sabar was crushed by the imperial troops. ³⁶ Under Justinian's reign many Christian edifices were erected which were predominantly intended to demonstrate the support of the Christian faith. ³⁷ One of these is the Church of St. Mary on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. ³⁸ The damaged Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, built by Constantine, was rebuilt by Justinian. ³⁹ The crowning glory of his construction projects, however, is the Church of Holy Wisdom, the *Hagia Sophia*, in Constantinople. ⁴⁰ It was intended to replace the earlier church of Theodosius which had been burned down in a revolt against Emperor Justinian. ⁴¹ The *Hagia Sophia* even surpasses the recently built Church of St. Polyeuctus in Constantinople which had been modelled on Solomon's Temple.

⁴² The Persian king Kavadh offered Emperor Justinian his son for adoption, but the emperor declined the offer. ⁴³ Kavadh was determined to enforce the Zoroastrian religion in the northern Christian province thus inflaming the wars with Byzantium once more. ⁴⁴ In the Battle of Dara the Persians were defeated by East-Rome. ⁴⁵ Subsequently the two superpowers entered into what they termed an Everlasting Peace. ⁴⁶ Now Justinian was in a position to concentrate on the lost territories of West-Rome. ⁴⁷ First his general Belisarius conquered the Vandals' realm in Africa. ⁴⁸ Then he marched through Sicily to attack the Ostrogoth kingdom in Italy which had been weakened after Theodoric's death. ⁴⁹ Just eight years later the Persians under the reign of Khosrow violated the peace with

Byzantium. ⁵⁰ The Sassanids invaded Syria and conquered the Byzantium metropolis of Antioch on the Orontes whose population had been decimated after two earthquakes. ⁵¹ Not just natural disasters but also a plague epidemic debilitated the two superpowers. ⁵² Even Emperor Justinian did not escape. ⁵³ After his convalescence he concerned himself increasingly with theological issues. ⁵⁴ The emperor was anxious to reintegrate the Monophysites into the Church, but kept being opposed by western bishops. ⁵⁵ Justinian confirmed the five ecclesiastical patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. ⁵⁶ This move was intended to secure the unity of the Church; a Church Council was supposed to settle possible disagreements.

⁵⁷ Monasticism was spreading in the west. ⁵⁸ The Council of Agde prohibited the building of monasteries for monks and nuns in the same place. ⁵⁹ The Ascetic Benedict of Nursia founded an order in Monte Cassino. ⁶⁰ The monks there mainly practiced agriculture and were self-sufficient. ⁶¹ The most important pillars of the Benedictine rules were prayer, physical work and obedience. ⁶² A learned monk and mathematician of Scythian origin by the name of Dionysius Exiguus operated in Rome at that time. ⁶³ He translated the Church Canons from Greek into Latin and calculated the Easter Table. ⁶⁴ Dionysius deemed it appropriate to use a way of counting the years starting with the accession to the throne by the Christian persecutor Diocletian and assumed the birth of Christ as a reference point for the Christian calendar. ⁶⁵ Even earlier the Christian theologian and historian Eusebius of Caesarea had attempted to create a Christian calendar. ⁶⁶ The Jews used their own calendar with the creation of man as its starting point. ⁶⁷ The Church decreed that the Jews were not permitted to celebrate Passover before the Christian festival of Easter. ⁶⁸ The Christian Feast Days gradually lose any connection to their Jewish roots. ⁶⁹ The rabbinical discussions over the orally transmitted Torah and the Judaic laws are now written down. ⁷⁰ The scriptures of the rabbis are called the Talmud. ⁷¹ The earlier transcripts of those discussions originated from the Jewish schools in Eretz Israel. ⁷² The later and more substantial transcripts mainly originated in the Jewish academies in Babylon.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 5

¹ *Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.*

² Peoples strive to preserve their respective territories or even expand them. ³ The world is in perpetual motion like a giant mill wheel propelled by the current of time. ⁴ So was General Belisarius by Emperor Justinian. ⁵ Justinian sent the experienced general everywhere where the Byzantine Empire was endangered.

⁶ Belisarius reorganised the degenerate troops. ⁷ He only recruited free, brave men, even from among the defeated tribes. ⁸ Under Belisarius' command Byzantium defeated the Persians at the Battle of Dara as previously mentioned. ⁹ After he had suppressed the uprising in Constantinople, Belisarius was sent to fight the Vandals. ¹⁰ When he was victorious in Africa, his rivals accused him of having himself proclaimed as king there. ¹¹ Celebrating his military victories in Italy, he was again accused of the same intention and ordered back to Constantinople. ¹² The imperial general Narses was then granted to claim the victory over the Ostrogoths in Italy. ¹³ Byzantium conquered the southern coast of Hispania with the city of Carthago Nova from the Visigoths and made it into the province of Hispania. ¹⁴ Thus the old Imperium Romanum was partly restored.

¹⁵ Belisarius defended the imperial city of Constantinople against the attacks of the Avars. ¹⁶ This nomadic tribe was similar to the Huns in many respects; for that reason they were occasionally also called by the same name. ¹⁷ The Avars had to move westwards to escape from the rule of the Ashina Turks. ¹⁸ The new Ottoman Empire destroyed the realm of the Hephthalites with the help of the Persians. ¹⁹ On their march to the west the Avars subdued the remaining Huns as well as other nomadic and some Slavic tribes. ²⁰ Emperor Justinian preferred to pay the Avars the tribute they demanded rather than fight them. ²¹ The East-Roman diplomats diverted the Avars' attention to the Frankish Realm. ²² The Avars were defeated by the Franks and returned to Pannonia. ²³ Belisarius was once more accused of a conspiracy against the emperor. ²⁴ The loyal Belisarius and his emperor died in the same year.

²⁵ The new Byzantine emperor Justin, Justinian's nephew, refused to continue paying tribute to the Avars. ²⁶ Meanwhile the Longobards allied themselves with the Avars and together they defeated the Gepids. ²⁷ The close proximity to the Avars, however, did not bode well and therefore the Longobards advanced further into Northern Italy. ²⁸ The arrival of the Avars initiated a displacement of the Slavic tribes. ²⁹ The Romans called them Barbarians or Slaves. ³⁰ Once the Longobards had moved west, the Slavs entered Pannonia, Noricum and Carantanum. ³¹ Some Slavic tribes fled southwards from the Avars and occupied Northern Greece as far as Thessaloniki. ³² Neither the Slavs nor the Avars were able to conquer this second most important Byzantine city. ³³ Unlike Roman culture, which had suffered through the invasion of foreign peoples, science continued to flourish in the east. ³⁴ Although Emperor Justinian dissolved the pagan-influenced School of Philosophy in Athens, Greek philosophers were still highly esteemed in Alexandria's Christian schools ³⁵ The Avars, under the

command of Khagan Bayan, enslaved most of the Slavic tribes. ³⁶ The Slavs were an enthusiastic farming people who settled in fertile regions.

³⁷ It was the nomadic Avars' custom to spent their winters with them and to take wives from among their midst. ³⁸ The Longobards started to practice agriculture in Northern Italy. ³⁹ The former Roman military base Pavia became the centre of the Longobards' realm. ⁴⁰ The Longobardian dukes elected Authari as their king; he adopted the name Flavius. ⁴¹ King Leovigild of the Visigoths, who confessed to Arianism, married his eldest son Hermenegild to a Frankish princess of Catholic faith. ⁴² Hermenegild was supposed to rule the southern part of the Visigoth realm with his seat in Seville. ⁴³ As the majority of the population was Catholic, he also converted to Catholicism. ⁴⁴ When Hermenegild rebelled against his father, the revolt was crushed and he was arrested. ⁴⁵ Following Leovigild's death, his younger son Reccared took the Visigoth throne. ⁴⁶ He, too, converted to Catholicism in an attempt to unite the realm in religious matters. ⁴⁷ His conversion resulted in conspiracies against him among Arian circles which he successfully suppressed, however. ⁴⁸ He convened a council in Toledo. ⁴⁹ But let us relate the ecclesiastical events in sequence.

⁵⁰ Emperor Justinian summoned the Second Council of Constantinople, mainly to address three theologians' controversial writings. ⁵¹ The council was attended by the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria; the Roman bishop Vigilius as well as the patriarch of Jerusalem were represented by their legates. ⁵² The contentious writings were eventually deemed to be heretic. ⁵³ The western bishops, foremost those from Italy, viewed this as a victory for the Monophysites and opposed the Council's decisions. ⁵⁴ In Tours Georgius Florentius was elected bishop and adopted the name of Gregorius. ⁵⁵ He was a historian who wrote several works including the history of the Franks up to the wars of Clovis' successors. ⁵⁶ This Frankish Dynasty owes its name Merovingian to Clovis' grandfather Merovech. ⁵⁷ One of Clovis' grandchildren, Chilperic, shied away from nothing to force the Jews to get baptised. ⁵⁸ Many of the Jews therefore fled; the others had a choice of converting to Christianity or having their eyes gouged out. ⁵⁹ The Jews' position also worsened in the Visigoth Empire.

⁶⁰ Let us return to the Council of Toledo. ⁶¹ Here it was decided to introduce the filioque doctrine into the Creed. ⁶² Another decree stipulated mandatory baptism for issue from Christian-Jewish relationships. ⁶³ The monk Gregory, an eminent Roman, was elected as the new Bishop of Rome. ⁶⁴ He chose the title *Servus Servorum Dei*, servant of the servants of God. ⁶⁵ Gregory specified the title *Pappas*, pope, as the exclusive title of office for the Bishop of Rome. ⁶⁶ He also founded new monasteries and propagated the Benedictine rules. ⁶⁷ As the

Longobards threatened parts of Italy, Gregory negotiated tribute payments with them. ⁶⁸ A revolt broke out in the Sassanid Empire during which King Hormizd was murdered by the nobility. ⁶⁹ His son Khosrow fled to Byzantium. ⁷⁰ Emperor Maurice helped him to introduce order in the Sassanid Empire. ⁷¹ Byzantium had to withstand repeated attacks from the Avars and the Slavs. ⁷² The Avars advanced as far as Constantinople; soon after the Byzantines plundered the Avars' territory again.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 6

¹ *The lion has roared – who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken – who can but prophesy?*

² The Jews are presently living in the diaspora, without homeland, without Temple. ³ In the city of Sura, in Babylonia, Mar bar Rab Chanan officiates as the first gaon. ⁴ Persia is ruled by Khosrow Parviz to whom the Jews attach great hope. ⁵ His adversary in Constantinople is the emperor Maurice. ⁶ Christendom is led from several centres, chief among them Constantinople and Jerusalem. ⁷ This is the time of Pope Gregory; Cyriacus is the Patriarch of Constantinople and Patriarch Amos resides in Jerusalem. ⁸ Ever more new tribes and peoples attack the borders of the established realms; they loot, murder and try to seize land and power. ⁹ In some places they depopulate entire regions, in others they only raid and plunder the cities, in others again they mix with the indigenous population and settle there. ¹⁰ In all the large empires an increasing number of soldiers are being recruited and large armies assembled to protect the frontiers, recapture what has been lost or conquer new territories. ¹¹ Jews also serve in the various countries' armies and fight for their respective rulers. ¹² Particularly in the Christian parts of the world the Jews are exposed to persecutions and evangelisation. ¹³ Forced baptisms have become the norm in some regions. ¹⁴ Although Pope Gregory has spoken out against it and demanded to stop the custom, the Jews feel little of his influence. ¹⁵ The rulers have other worries. ¹⁶ Emperor Maurice conducted several successful wars of defence against the Slavs. ¹⁷ He assisted the Persian Khosrow to take the throne and was rewarded with Northern Mesopotamia. ¹⁸ Maurice was, however, murdered during the mutiny of the general Phokas. ¹⁹ Phokas subsequently seized the throne, but Khosrow did not approve. ²⁰ He started invading the Roman territories. ²¹ One of Rome's major enemies, the up to now oppressed realm of the Avars, was thus able to recover, even strengthen its power. ²² But Phokas, too, strived to consolidate his position and tried to forge allegiances. ²³ To this end he presented the newly elected Pope Boniface with the Pantheon in Rome. ²⁴ The

pope had it converted into a church and dedicated it to the Christian martyrs.
25 Despite his best endeavours, Phokas was unable to keep the throne, the more so since he lost territories to the Persians. 26 He was overthrown and mutilated by Heraclius' soldiers. 27 Son of the Proconsul of Carthage, Heraclius was crowned emperor in Constantinople. 28 The Persians used the power struggles and change of emperor in Constantinople to invade Syria. 29 In Constantinople Sergius succeeded Thomas as patriarch.

30 While a fratricidal war raged between the Merovingians Theudebert and Theodoric, the Persian military leader Shahrbaraz conquered Damascus. 31 This made all the Jews listen up. 32 They saw their chance to realise their century-long dream with the help of the Persians. 33 They supported the Persians in any way possible and were in return promised to be allowed to return to Jerusalem if the Persians were victorious. 34 The Jews would have done anything to achieve that objective. 35 The atmosphere was messianic; the air filled with tense anticipation. 36 Centuries of exile, oppression, humiliation, enslavement and forced Christianisation supported the cry for war and retribution. 37 And the Persians in fact succeeded in conquering Jerusalem with the Jews' aid. 38 Christendom was shocked; the relic of the Cross was abducted to Persia. 39 Several churches were destroyed; countless Christians lost their lives. 40 The Jews assisted enthusiastically and became even more hated by the Christians. 41 After their conquest, the Persians kept their promise to the Jews, albeit only for a short time. 42 The Jews' fate was the same they continuously experienced when they relied on themselves and their allies instead of God. 43 At first they were granted permission to settle in Judea and Jerusalem. 44 Jerusalem was given a Jewish government headed by Nehemiah ben Hushiel. 45 The people cheered, forged elaborate plans and wanted to rebuild the Temple. 46 But subsequent events did not bode well.

47 Quite soon the Persians changed their benevolent stance towards the Jews. 48 Due to the reorientation of their foreign policy and pressure from the Christians they once more prohibited the Jews from entering Jerusalem. 49 When Heraclius later on succeeded in reconquering the city, the Jews were once again exposed to violence. 50 Despite the emperor's threats, the Christians exacted revenge on them. 51 The rapport between Jews and Christians was at an all-time low. 52 Both sides were fuelled by enmity, bitterness and hatred. 53 The Jews could not imagine anything worse than once more losing their Promised Land and Jerusalem and see Israel's former glory occupied by strangers. 54 But just that was the Christians' primary objective, i.e. to dispel the Jews from their everlasting possession and to keep them away from their Holy City. 55 The relic of the Cross was ceremoniously returned to Jerusalem by Heraclius. 56 The Christians became increasingly

powerful and inflicted more and more suffering on the Jews. ⁵⁷ The Jews on their part were no less outraged with the Christians and kept antagonising them wherever they could. ⁵⁸ But mostly they fled to at least escape with their scarce belongings and their very lives. ⁵⁹ Both sides perpetrated atrocities against each other in the name of the same God, both of them convinced to be acting in His name. ⁶⁰ But since they both called on God, his answer was not long coming. ⁶¹ And it was very different to their expectations.

⁶² In the south-east Arabic town of Mecca a man claimed to be receiving divine messages at that time. ⁶³ The man was called Muhammad and he came from a Mecca-based clan of the Quraysh tribe. ⁶⁴ His father was already dead at the time of his birth and his mother also died by the time he was six. ⁶⁵ From then on he lived with his grandfather. ⁶⁶ Two years later his grandfather was also dead and Muhammad was raised by his uncle Abu Talib, an influential merchant. ⁶⁷ It did not take long before he was in charge of his uncle's caravans. ⁶⁸ At the age of twenty he started working for the rich widow Khadijah. ⁶⁹ He became a successful trader. ⁷⁰ At twenty five he married the considerably older widow and sired four children with her. ⁷¹ He was regarded as an honest, sincere and humble man. ⁷² Mecca was a trading centre also known as a place of pilgrimage. ⁷³ The temple in Mecca enshrined the famous Kaaba, which in those days was consecrated to a god, but also to several hundred minor deities. ⁷⁴ Many a Jewish clan lived in Mecca and there were also Christian communities. ⁷⁵ The latter were regarded as heretics by Rome as they used apocryphal writings, i.e. non-verified by the Church, in their Liturgy and also engaged in other peculiar customs not approved by the Church.

⁷⁶ Muhammad claimed that the Angel Gabriel had appeared to him and delivered a message from God. ⁷⁷ According to Muhammad the message had been primarily concerned with the revelation of the One True God and with his own vocation as a prophet. ⁷⁸ Initially Muhammad was sceptical and doubted his calling, but once his encounters with the angel Gabriel were repeated he accepted his vocation as a prophet. ⁷⁹ Over time a doubting, even desperate man, who had wanted to take his own life, became a confident, fearless herald of the messages he received. ⁸⁰ His wife Khadijah became his first follower. ⁸¹ The main theme of his sermons, that Allah was the only God who will one day judge the world, was a thorn in the side of many citizens of Mecca. ⁸² A large part of them made a living from the pilgrims who travelled to their city to worship various deities there. ⁸³ Muhammad's teachings seemed irreconcilable with Mecca's traditions. ⁸⁴ However, he persisted with his teachings and won several supporters; consequently he and his followers engendered the wrath of the Meccans. ⁸⁵ Some of his supporters soon fled from

the city, but he also left with a group of them and went to Yathrib. ⁸⁶ There the first Muslim community was founded shortly after.

⁸⁷ The foundation of the Muslim faith was the belief in the One True God, in the Angels, the Divine Revelation and the Prophets, in the Day of Judgment and the divine purpose or guidance of all His creatures. ⁸⁸ Muhammad also presented the messages he received to the Jews and the Christians. ⁸⁹ Neither side took him seriously, but instead laughed at him and accused him of being ignorant of the Holy Scriptures and the Biblical teachings as well as their falsification. ⁹⁰ It has to be stressed that Muhammad could neither read nor write. ⁹¹ This was also used as an opportunity to summarily reject his assertions and dismiss his revelations as hallucinations. ⁹² Outcast by the Meccans and repudiated by the Christians and the Jews, whose God he believed to be proclaiming, he was destined to suffer the fate of most of the prophets: disgrace, persecution and death. ⁹³ But the tide suddenly turned in Yathrib. ⁹⁴ And not long after also the fate of those who had rejected him: the Meccans, Jews and Christians. ⁹⁵ In Muhammad's visions, according to his own accounts, he received permission to wage war. ⁹⁶ Initially he and his followers raided Meccan caravans until he achieved a brilliant victory over the Meccans some years later. ⁹⁷ The Meccans subsequently accepted the new religion; the Kaaba was purified from the idol images and Mecca was declared the Holy City of Islam. ⁹⁸ Meanwhile the first Jewish clan was evicted from Yathrib. ⁹⁹ A year later the banishment of the Banu Nadir tribe occurred. ¹⁰⁰ The third tribe, that of Banu Qurayza, offered resistance for twenty five days. ¹⁰¹ In the end they were defeated, the men executed, the women and children sold into slavery.

¹⁰² Muhammad's and the Muslims' initial sympathy towards the Jews turned into intolerance and even hatred. ¹⁰³ After Muhammad's death this animosity subsided. ¹⁰⁴ The Muslims' stance towards the Christians followed a similar course. ¹⁰⁵ The earlier sympathy grew into hostility after the Christians had labelled Muhammad as a false prophet. ¹⁰⁶ After his teachings had been rejected by the Jews and the Christians, Muhammad virtually changed the global orientation of Islam. ¹⁰⁷ He now pursued a more active and violent Islamisation. ¹⁰⁸ He sent letters to various rulers summoning them to adopt the Islamic faith. ¹⁰⁹ This was addressed to those targeted and their subordinates. ¹¹⁰ His request was in fact frequently accepted and thus the number of believers grew. ¹¹¹ Wherever this did not happen, the Muslims' swords and determination did the rest. ¹¹² The Islamic campaigns of conquest became increasingly more daring and successful. ¹¹³ Mohammed died after a prolonged illness, yet Islam spread regardless, even faster than before. ¹¹⁴ The astounding success of Islam is even more inconceivable considering that those fighting for its domination were completely inexperienced governmental and

military leaders and mostly uneducated men who did not even know one another. 115 How a horde of Bedouins, Arabs and Barbarians managed to threaten all the known empires of the time and take over large territories was virtually a miracle. 116 Now at the latest the Christians should have remembered the words of Gamaliel who had once said with regard to Jesus' apostles and their proclamation: 117 Let go of these men and release them; should their endeavours or their work be of human origin, it will be destroyed, but should it be God's will, you will not be able to destroy them without being thought of as fighting God himself. 118 The Christian leaders considered this warning, which had been heeded by the Jewish High Council, as irrelevant. 119 Instead they fought the Muslims even more vigorously. 120 But soon the tide turned completely. 121 The Muslim warriors conquered increasingly large regions of the Persian Empire and that of the renowned Emperor Heraclius. 122 Islam spread like wildfire. 123 A never before experienced mass orientation towards the True God, the Creator of the World, occurred. 124 Partly through military victories, partly through skilled negotiations, the Muslims dominated numerous Persian cities as far as Egypt. 125 Soon it was Jerusalem's turn. 126 The army of the Syrian caliphate, under the command of Abu Ubaidah, started to besiege Jerusalem, but did not attack it, however. 127 After a six month siege and lengthy negotiations, Patriarch Sophronius voluntarily surrendered the city to the Muslims. 128 According to their contract with Caliph Umar the Christians were permitted to practice their religion under the condition that they would pay a special tax to the Muslim administration.

129 The Jews were also granted a certain degree of autonomy. 130 Just a few years after their expulsion through the Persians and the Christians and half a millennium after the loss of Jerusalem to the Romans, the Jews were once again allowed to settle in Jerusalem and Judea. 131 This ushered in a more favourable situation for the Jews compared to that under the Christians despite the Jews' strict rejection of Islam and Muhammad's former animosity. 132 Even after Muhammad's death there was no rest for the Muslims. 133 Soon they disagreed over Muhammad's legitimate succession. 134 Caliphs changed in rapid succession; some of them were murdered. 135 Different traditions of interpreting the Koran developed. 136 History thus repeats itself: amongst the Israelites different streams emerge after Joshua's death and amongst the Christians after the events at Pentecost. 137 Despite inner tensions, power struggles and wars, the number of Muslims rises steadily, their reign extends over ever larger territories and they become more and more powerful. 138 Virtually overnight they have established themselves as a decisive factor in world history. 139 More or less from nothing, inside a decade, they became the most feared opponents of the remaining global powers. 140 It can not be denied that many people voluntarily converted to Islam and became ardent admirers of

Allah. ¹⁴¹ The Jews' position stabilises and becomes somewhat more secure under Muslim rule. ¹⁴² The Christians react in various ways depending on their location and the strength of their own realm. ¹⁴³ It is apparent that an entirely new era has dawned and Jewish as well as Christian religious leaders would be well advised to thoroughly explore the situation and ask for God's guidance in prayer. ¹⁴⁴ The future will show if and to what extent this will be successful.

Part THREE

CHAPTER 7

¹ *The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.*
² *But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

³ The Muslim Arabs' conquests continue. ⁴ The heavily stricken Persian Empire, after long years of war against East-Rome, is unable to hold its own against them. ⁵ Yazdegerd's death marks the end of the Sassanid realm, although Sassanid thought and culture survive the fall. ⁶ The Christian Armenians, disappointed by the Patriarch of Constantinople's intolerance of their faith, voluntarily submit to the Arabs' sovereignty. ⁷ The Nubian states defy the Arabs' attacks and a peace treaty guarantees them Christian supremacy. ⁸ The Arabs also take the Kingdom of Aksum, but Christianity in the region of Ethiopia is preserved.

⁹ East-Rome, considering its naval fleet to be invincible, is shocked by the unexpected victory of the Arabs' fleet at the Battle of Phoenix. ¹⁰ Captured goods flow into the capital and are mainly divided amongst the relatives of the caliph's family which causes unrest amongst the smaller tribes. ¹¹ In order to justify his politics, Uthman, the third caliph, cites Allah's Will. ¹² Political opposition is henceforth declared as rebellion against Allah himself; social tensions increase and eventually lead to Uthman's assassination. ¹³ Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, is elected as the fourth caliph. ¹⁴ Under his rule the first inter-Islamic civil war ensues. ¹⁵ A stubborn opponent of his is Muhammad's youngest wife Aisha who gathers a large following to fight against Ali. ¹⁶ At the Battle of the Camel at Basra, Ali defeats her and magnanimously pardons her. ¹⁷ But Ali's enemy Muawiyah, governor of Syria, does not give up. In the resulting Battle of Siffin, Ali is persuaded by Muawiyah to accept an arbitration court's decision regarding the succession. ¹⁹ Ali's stance disgruntles the Khawarij who subsequently secede, thereby strengthening Muawiyah's position. ²⁰ Following Ali's murder, Muawiyah succeeds in persuading Ali's successor Hasan to abdicate from the caliphate. ²¹ Muawiyah becomes caliph instead and Hasan swears him allegiance. ²² Muawiyah emphasises the divine legitimation of his office even

more. ²³ This enables him to appoint his son Yazid as his successor and the caliphate de facto becomes a kingdom. ²⁴ Religion is increasingly misused for political objectives. ²⁵ Despite the inner rift, the realm continues its invasions. ²⁶ The consequences are soon felt by the seaports of the Iberian Peninsula, particularly by their Jewish population who is being accused by the Visigoths to be in league with the Arabs. ²⁷ The Arabs intend to conquer the entire East-Roman Empire. ²⁸ First they take some Aegean islands and cities, but to bring East-Rome to its knees they have to conquer Constantinople, which proves to be impossible. ²⁹ The Byzantines employ Greek fire in the defence of the city; an extremely efficient weapon augmenting Constantinople's virtually impregnable walls. ³⁰ The Umayyads are, however, victorious in the Battle of Sebastopolis. ³¹ They also capture the strongly fortified Carthage; the once flourishing city is raised to the ground. ³² Thus East-Rome's rule in Northern Africa is a thing of the past. ³³ The East-Roman Empire, so powerful in the past, has been reduced to a third of its former size. ³⁴ It gradually loses its cosmopolitan character to be replaced by an increasingly Greek one. ³⁵ Merely the administration remains Roman. ³⁶ Due to constant threats by external enemies, the army is being reorganised. ³⁷ The professional army, financed by public taxes, is replaced by a regionally organised one which is compensated with property. ³⁸ So-called constitutional districts led by military governors are formed.

³⁹ Meanwhile the newly established realms of the predominantly Germanic settlers stabilise in the territory of the former West-Roman Empire. ⁴⁰ His victory of the Battle of Tertry sees Pippin as the ruler of the entire Frankish Empire. ⁴¹ Here, too, the administration is organised according to the Roman model. ⁴² The ruling minority integrates itself and adopts the culture of the old-established majority. ⁴³ Latin, the official language of the former Roman Empire, is increasingly being vulgarised. ⁴⁴ Very few people are literate; those that are being nearly exclusively members of the clergy and the nobility. ⁴⁵ Parchment gradually replaces papyrus. ⁴⁶ King Recceswinth promotes inner unity through a code of law which applies to the Roman as well as the Visigoth Germanic regions.

⁴⁷ Christian monks from Ireland and Scotland, who missionise the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks, come into conflict with the Roman missionaries despatched by the pope. ⁴⁸ This concerns differences of opinion regarding the liturgy and questions concerning the traditions. ⁴⁹ The controversy is settled at the Synod of Whitby where the Roman Church Constitution is enforced. ⁵⁰ Christian leaders assume not only religious but also secular duties. ⁵¹ Ecclesiastical institutions are subject to the respective ruler who may even intervene in spiritual matters. ⁵² Emperors and kings not just reserve the right to convene councils, Emperor Constans even has

the officiating pope arrested, flogged and exiled. ⁵³ Rulers and nobles also found numerous monasteries which they then exploit for their economic, sovereign and even spiritual interests. ⁵⁴ At the Third Council of Constantinople Monothelitism is officially declared a heresy. ⁵⁵ The Quinisext in Trullo, summoned by the Byzantine emperor Justinian, negatively affects the Jewish population. ⁵⁶ Amongst other things, Christian clerics can no longer be treated by Jewish physicians. ⁵⁷ Pope Sergius disagrees with the synod's decisions but, under pressure from the emperor, has to retract his opposition. ⁵⁸ More inhuman laws against the Jews are decreed at the Council of Toledo which are veritably aimed at exterminating Judaism. ⁵⁹ Under the pretext of the Jews having entered into a subversive conspiracy with the Muslims, their children are taken from them and they are declared outlaws amongst other consequences. ⁶⁰ Once again they are accused of deicide. ⁶¹ Solely the Jews from the Gallic province of Septimania are exempt as their taxes are needed.

⁶² Let us now take a look at the events in the territories conquered by the caliphate. ⁶³ The existing civil and financial administration is preserved. ⁶⁴ Even high ranking offices are occasionally held by non-Muslims. ⁶⁵ Although Islamisation is not enforced, many convert to Islam. ⁶⁶ Numerous prisoners of war do this to regain their freedom. ⁶⁷ Those who do not convert have to pay poll and property taxes. ⁶⁸ Under Caliph Abd al-Malik Arabic replaces Greek and Persian as the official language. ⁶⁹ The Dinar is introduced as the caliphate's currency; other means of payment, however, are not withdrawn from circulation. ⁷⁰ Abd al-Malik has a sacred dome structure erected above the famous rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. ⁷¹ It was he who ended the inter-Islamic civil war with the conquest of Mecca and enforced the caliph's absolute authority. ⁷² The many wars, plagues and famines associated with it result in a population decrease of terrifying proportions.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 1

¹ *Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth.* ² *He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*

³ Islam floods the world and the sacred Koran – the ishmaelite version of the Bible – becomes the source of their knowledge of God for many. ⁴ At the Battle of Taharqa the resistance of the Berber tribes, many of which adhered to the Jewish faith, was defeated. ⁵ All of Northern Africa has been converted to Islam; nearly all the four hundred Christian bishoprics connected to famous names such as

Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius and Augustine have perished. ⁶ Abd al-Malik succeeded Al-Walid as caliph in Damascus; he reinstated expansionism at the eastern Persian border. ⁷ From the African coast Muslim troops, aided by Islamised Berbers, landed on al-Andalus and captured the small yet strategically important peninsula they subsequently named Jabal-al-Tariq after their military leader. ⁸ In the Battle of Guadalete they went on to devastatingly defeat the Visigoths. ⁹ Then they prepared to conquer the Iberian Peninsula. ¹⁰ Theudimer, the ruler of Todmir, successfully negotiated a certain degree of autonomy for his province, naturally in return for tribute payments.

¹¹ In Asia the Muslims conquered the Indus valley. ¹² Transoxiana was also conquered despite tenacious resistance. ¹³ Of course, Constantinople had never lost sight of the Muslim rulers. ¹⁴ General Maslama began another siege of Constantinople with the support of a naval fleet under the command of Caliph Sulayman. ¹⁵ The Greeks, however, were prepared for the attack and managed to destroy the enemy's fleet. ¹⁶ As the walls of Constantinople could not be stormed, the invaders started their siege. ¹⁷ The long, severe winter claimed numerous victims among them, however, and made replenishment of supplies problematic. ¹⁸ When they were then attacked by the Bulgars, they abandoned the siege. ¹⁹ From then on, the Muslims' military successes varied. ²⁰ Although they still advanced further in the direction of the Pyrenees on the Iberian Peninsula, conquered Septimania and invaded the Frankish Empire, they kept being driven back behind the mountain range.

²¹ Pelayo of Asturias defeated the Arabs in the Battle of Covadonga. ²² The Muslims' siege of Nicaea failed; their attempt to capture Syracuse was foiled by the plague. ²³ During the Battle of Tours, also referred to as the Battle of Poitiers, they were forced back behind the Pyrenees by a collaborative campaign of the Franks, the Langobards, the Saxons and the Frisians. ²⁴ But the Arabs were not to be deterred; again and again they dispatched troops across the Pyrenees where their progress was arrested by the mayor Charles. ²⁵ After decades of fighting the Khazars in the Caucasus region they finally advanced as far as the Volga. ²⁶ Peace had just been established in the Caucasus when trouble brewed in North Africa. ²⁷ Maysara's revolt took years to oppress. ²⁸ At the Battle of Akroinon the Muslim army under the command of Caliph Hisham was defeated by East-Rome and expelled from Asia Minor. ²⁹ On the Iberian Peninsula King Alfonso wrestled Galicia from them. ³⁰ In Iraq the Khawarij uprising was barely suppressed. ³¹ Military failures, uprisings and revolts were accompanied by rapid changes in succession, thus increasingly weakening the Umayyad Dynasty. ³² The rebellion

of Abu Muslim in East-Iran eventually heralded the fall of the Umayyad and the rise of the Abbasid Dynasty.

³³ In the new realms that have been established in the former Western-Roman territories the respective officiating rulers are also overthrown, frequently assassinated or mutilated. ³⁴ But there is also a new tendency of rulers abdicating in favour of a modest life inside a monastery. ³⁵ Some of them, however, are being forced. ³⁶ Following Pippin's death, the Frankish Empire was shaken to the core. ³⁷ As Pippin's sons had already died before him, his widow Plectrudis secured the office of Mayor of the Palace for her grandson Theudoald. ³⁸ She had Charles, Pippin's illegitimate son, arrested to prevent him from possibly claiming the succession. ³⁹ But she had not included the nobles of the segmented realms, who used the opportunity to further their own aims, in her calculations. ⁴⁰ Once Charles escaped from prison, also joined the arena and emerged victoriously from the battles against Neustria, Plectrudis was once and for all out of the running. ⁴¹ Charles forced her to return his father's royal treasures to him. ⁴² This, together with his spoils of war, enabled him to secure his followers' loyalty. ⁴³ Something he desperately needed in view of his numerous opponents. ⁴⁴ He successfully waged war against the Frisians, Saxons, Alemanni and Bavarians, but also against parts of Aquitaine, Burgundy and Provence. ⁴⁵ Not only was he a skilled strategist who violently subjugated his opponents, he was also an accomplished politician. ⁴⁶ Thus he ensured the Langobards' allegiance by offering their king his son for adoption. ⁴⁷ He was also well disposed towards Christian missionaries. ⁴⁸ After the death of the Merovingian king Theuderic, Charles did not appoint the king's son as his father's successor; instead he confined him to a monastery. ⁴⁹ As Mayor of the Palace he then reigned over the entire Frankish Empire in his own name until his death. ⁵⁰ His sons Pippin and Carloman were also not to enjoy any prolonged periods of peace but were continuously engaged in military conflict with the neighbouring tribes. ⁵¹ Having defeated the Alemannis' last revolt and integrated their realm into the Frankish one, Carloman resigned as Mayor of the Palace and chose the monastic life. ⁵² Thereafter his brother Pippin ruled the entire empire. ⁵³ In order to thwart excesses in Christendom, the missionary Boniface summoned the Germanic bishops to a synod to reform the Frankish Church where the clerics were from then on forbidden to carry arms and Benedict of Nursia's monastic rules were stipulated as mandatory for all monasteries. ⁵⁴ Neither did Byzantium have to report any inspiring news. ⁵⁵ First the Christians were defeated at Anchialos by the Bulgars. ⁵⁶ Emperor Justinian was overthrown; he and his six-year-old son killed. ⁵⁷ Philippicus Bardanes, the new emperor, was successful in his wars against the Bulgars. ⁵⁸ But this did not assure him any advantages as an ungrateful part of his troops dethroned and blinded him. ⁵⁹ His successor

Anastasius was also not destined to enjoy the title for very long; he was overthrown by one of his former treasury officials who then reigned as Emperor Theodosius until the Syrian Leo claimed power for himself. ⁶⁰ Leo decreed compulsory baptism for Jews and adherents of Montanism. ⁶¹ As Christianity increasingly distances itself from its Jewish roots, it is not surprising that the veneration of images has meanwhile become more widespread and keeps growing. ⁶² This is now being criticised by those who regard the worship of images as a relapse into paganism. ⁶³ They cite the Second Commandment and demand that idolatry be outlawed. ⁶⁴ In their opinion the many political fiascos, natural disasters and plagues sent by God are the punishment for the Christians having defied the commandment.

⁶⁵ And usurpers to the throne keep emerging. ⁶⁶ Following the false news that Constantinople had fallen, Tiberius was proclaimed as anti-emperor. ⁶⁷ While Caesar Constantine was fighting against the Arabs in Anatolia, his brother-in-law Artabasdos took possession of Constantinople. ⁶⁸ After Constantine had once more taken the reign, he had Artabasdos and his sons blinded and exiled. ⁶⁹ The only positive news can be heard from the Khazar territories. ⁷⁰ Bulan, their king, it was reported, had converted to Judaism and organised his realm according to Jewish religious principles. ⁷¹ Here Jews, Christians, Muslims and pagans are meant to peacefully cohabit. ⁷² Nobody would be forced to be circumcised or otherwise be oppressed because of their faith.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 2

¹ *What is the will of God and how do we know it?*

² Many assumed the title of ruler, but had no power; others, on the other hand, held the power without the title. ³ The Frankish ruler Pippin aspired to both. ⁴ He dispatched a delegation to Pope Zachary for a decisive answer to his question if it was beneficial that the kings in the Frankish realm did not possess any power. ⁵ Acting on the Pope's reply that it would be more advisable to designate those as king who possessed power, Pippin made King Childeric abdicate, installed him in an abbey and had himself proclaimed as king in his stead.

⁶ Aistulf, king of the Langobards, was threatening Pope Stephen who subsequently approached Pippin for help. ⁷ Following the dispute over the veneration of images, the relationship between Rome and Constantinople had been destroyed. ⁸ Pippin came to the pope's aid and defeated Aistulf who then pledged to return the occupied territories. ⁹ Pippin had barely called back his troops, when Aistulf broke

his pledge and besieged Rome anew. ¹⁰ When Pippin returned, Aistulf had to capitulate. ¹¹ The conquered territories, Pippin ceded to the pope. ¹² During further military expeditions, Pippin suppressed a Saxon uprising and conquered Septimania. ¹³ Through the latter, the Moors were driven back. ¹⁴ When Duke Waiofar of Aquitaine revolted against Pippin, Pippin invaded and conquered his realm. ¹⁵ Following Aistulf's death, his brother Rachtis tried to seize power. ¹⁶ Desiderius of Tuscany, who allied himself with Pope Stephen and received military and diplomatic support from the Frankish realm, pre-empted him. ¹⁷ He promised the pope to donate several cities to him. ¹⁸ Rachtis consequently retired to the abbey at Monte Cassino. ¹⁹ Desiderius' diplomatic attempt to enter into a pact with Byzantium against the pope failed. ²⁰ Pope Paul, fearing a possible Byzantine invasion, asked the Franks to mediate between him and Desiderius. ²¹ Although Desiderius made concessions to the Frankish delegates, he later reneged on his promises. ²² After years of negotiations, the dispute was resolved.

²³ The Byzantine emperor Constantine was involved in warfare against the Arabs and Bulgars. ²⁴ The Khazars supported his battles against the Arabs. ²⁵ When the Bulgars defeated the Byzantines, peace negotiations commenced between the two parties. ²⁶ The Bulgar khan Winech, who led the talks, was assassinated by his nobles as they believed he made too many concessions to Byzantium. ²⁷ Telez, his successor, then devastated the border territories of the Byzantine Empire. ²⁸ This prompted Constantine to take his army to Anchialos. ²⁹ Both sides suffered substantial losses in the subsequent battle. ³⁰ Constantine emerged as the victor and had all prisoners killed. ³¹ Found guilty of a conspiracy against Constantine, Strategios Podopagouros and his brother paid with their lives. ³² Their helpers and co-conspirators were blinded and exiled. ³³ After Constantine's death, Leo became his successor. ³⁴ He successfully fought the Arabs and the Bulgars. ³⁵ However, when he proclaimed his son Constantine as co-regent, he had to suppress his half-brothers' revolt.

³⁶ On Pippin's death, the Frankish empire was divided between his sons Charles and Carloman. ³⁷ Carloman, who reigned over half the empire, died unexpectedly. ³⁸ Charles waged numerous wars against the Saxons. ³⁹ He also enforced their Christianisation. ⁴⁰ When he dismissed the daughter of the Langobards' king after a year of marriage, Desiderius began to feud with the Franks and to threaten the pope. ⁴¹ Charles did not hesitate to come to Pope Adrian's aid, renewed his alliance with him and besieged Verona and Pavia. ⁴² He also maintained friendly relations with Offa, the King of Mercia. ⁴³ As a protection against the Muslims, Charles established the subkingdom of Aquitaine and made his son Louis the regent.

⁴⁴ In the Arabian world the ruling Umayyads were defeated at a tributary river of the Tigris by rebels under the command of Abu al-Abbas as-Saffah. ⁴⁵ The prince Abd al-Rahman, who had escaped the massacre, made it to Andalusia with the support of the Berbers. ⁴⁶ At that time Yusuf al-Fihri was the governor of al-Andalus. ⁴⁷ Abd al-Rahman defeated him at the river Guadalquivir and declared himself the Emir of Cordoba. ⁴⁸ Following Abu al-Abbas as-Saffah's death, both al-Mansur and his uncle claimed the succession. ⁴⁹ Al-Mansur won. ⁵⁰ He had sent Abu Muslim, the governor of Khorasan into battle where he defeated al Mansur's uncle at Nisibis. ⁵¹ But al-Mansur did not reward him well. ⁵² He had him assassinated as a dangerous rival. ⁵³ The imam Dscha'far as-Sadiq also found his death under al-Mansur's reign. ⁵⁴ His demise caused much dispute about the legitimate imam. ⁵⁵ Al-Mansur did not spare his enemies either in his war against the Alids and finally defeated them. ⁵⁶ His successor al-Mahdi, on the other hand, aimed at a reconciliation policy with the Alids. ⁵⁷ His reign was one of peace and prosperity; the arts and the economy flourished and were supported by him. ⁵⁸ His son Musa was heir to the throne. ⁵⁹ He, in turn, was murdered by his brother Harun al-Rashid after the first year of his reign.

⁶⁰ Back to the Frankish Empire ruled by Charles who is involved in wars and has Christianised several ethnic groups. ⁶¹ He is tolerant towards the Jews, even took some of them into his service, and no encroachments occur during his reign. ⁶² The conversion to the Jewish religion of his court chaplain Bodo created much stir. ⁶³ Bodo then moved to al-Andalus where the Jews were allowed to practice any profession of their choice. ⁶⁴ In Byzantium Irene attended to government affairs as her son Constantine was still too young to serve as Leo's successor. ⁶⁵ Irene entered into a pact with Charles and summoned another Council of Nicaea. ⁶⁶ At this synod the decrees of the Council of Hieria were abolished and veneration of religious images was reinstated in order to end the decade-long controversy. ⁶⁷ To prevent similar arguments in the future, the second Biblical Commandment was simply omitted and the tenth one divided into two. ⁶⁸ When Constantine was old enough to take over the government, his mother Irene stood in his way. ⁶⁹ Due to a revolt against his mother and her leading court official by Armenian soldiers, he eventually did take the throne. ⁷⁰ But during an uprising of Irene's allies Constantine was taken prisoner. ⁷¹ He was blinded and died from his injuries. ⁷² The empire's frontiers are still unsafe; the situation inside the realm unstable.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 3

¹ He who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.

² There is nothing new under the sun; the human heart has not changed. ³ Ordinary people celebrate their festivals: the Jews their Jewish ones, the Christians their Christian ones, the Muslim their Muslim ones, the pagans their pagan ones. ⁴ The ordinary man ekes a living, hopes for rain at the right time, for good yields from his fields and the leniency of the lord to whom he has to deliver part of his harvest. ⁵ He worries about his family, fears plagues and wars. ⁶ The mighty ruling classes, however, are occupied with quite different things. ⁷ They are ruled by their heads, not their hearts, and greedily hunger for the fulfilment of their apparently never-ending desires.

⁸ We shall now concern ourselves with the great and chronicle those events for you which we deem interesting. ⁹ Caliph Harun al-Rashid, who had made Baghdad into a metropolis, conquered Cyprus and extorted high tribute payments from the Byzantine empress Irene. ¹⁰ He ordered that Jews and Christians mark their clothes to distinguish them. ¹¹ Perhaps he was trying to protect his subjects and the believers from intermarrying, but be that as it may, this rule would certainly not have encouraged the appreciation of those of different faiths. ¹² Before his death, Harun apportioned the empire between his sons al-Amin and al-Ma'mun. ¹³ Soon after, he died at the battle against the Khawarij in Sistan. ¹⁴ Al Amin tried to evade the agreed line of succession. ¹⁵ He designated his underage son as heir to the throne. ¹⁶ Of course, Al Ma'mun was not prepared to accept this. ¹⁷ His general Tahir defeated al-Amin's general. ¹⁸ Tahir occupied Baghdad and overthrew al-Amin. ¹⁹ Al-Ma'mun proclaimed himself as caliph. ²⁰ Al-Amin finally surrendered and Tahir had him beheaded. ²¹ Al Ma'mun had to suppress a revolt by the Alids who had already ousted several Abbasid governors. ²² He proclaimed Ali ibn Musa as his successor and replaced the Abbasids' black banners with green ones; he also instructed his officials to wear green. ²³ The Abbasid princes were furious and declared Ibrahim al-Mahdi as anti-caliph. ²⁴ In the end Ali ibn Musa died and al-Mahdi abdicated. ²⁵ Al Ma'mun invaded Baghdad. ²⁶ He made the teachings of the Mutacilits the state doctrine and demanded an oath from the officials that the Koran had been created by God. ²⁷ All those not prepared to take the oath were tortured, even killed. ²⁸ Thus the judgements of the people differ from those of The Highest. ²⁹ While God judges the acts of the individual, man presumes to judge the validity of other's faiths. ³⁰ Far removed are the sentences of those self-proclaimed judges from that of The Highest! ³¹ In the end He will also adjudicate their actions. ³² Following al-Ma'mun's death, Harun's third son, al-Mu'tasim, assumed the burdens and the honour of the caliphate. ³³ It fell to him to crush the

rebellion of Babak Khorramdin. ³⁴ Babak had organised the revolt after Abu Muslim's assassination. ³⁵ He fled to Armenia after his defeat. ³⁶ There he was betrayed to Abbasid troops and executed after having been tortured. ³⁷ The next caliph, al-Wathiq, had to fight the revolts of the Banu Hilal and the Banu Sulaym in Hejaz. ³⁸ When al-Mutawakkil became caliph, he rescinded the state doctrine of the Mutacilits and thus those had to suffer who had previously inflicted suffering on others. ³⁹ Human conditions change that rapidly. ⁴⁰ In the Byzantine Empire Nikephoros had dethroned Empress Irene and exiled her to Lesbos. ⁴¹ He recognised Charles as the emperor of the Frankish Empire and entered into a treaty with him. ⁴² This treaty mutually agreed on the boundaries of their respective empires. ⁴³ Bardanes Tourkos, who had rebelled against Nikephoros, was exiled to a monastery; a similar fate befell the patrician Arsaber. ⁴⁴ Nikephoros suffered a major defeat in Phrygia and when he invaded Bulgaria he was killed by the Bulgars under the command of Khan Krum. ⁴⁵ His son Staurakios, who succeeded him, was also so gravely wounded that a revolt easily dethroned him. ⁴⁶ Then his brother-in-law Michael Rhangabe became emperor. ⁴⁷ Michael, too, lost a battle against the Bulgars at Adrianople. ⁴⁸ When the troops proclaimed Leo as emperor, Michael retired to a monastery. ⁴⁹ Leo successfully defeated the Bulgars who were already besieging Constantinople. ⁵⁰ He entered into a thirty year peace treaty with Khan Omurtag. ⁵¹ After Leo's murder, Michael took the throne. ⁵² Thomas proclaimed himself as anti-Caesar and laid siege to Constantinople with his followers. ⁵³ Michael turned to Khan Omurtag for help and thus succeeded in forcing Thomas back. ⁵⁴ Eventually Thomas was impaled by his own supporters. ⁵⁵ The Muslims used the Byzantine civil war to take Crete. ⁵⁶ Theophilos succeeded his father Michael. ⁵⁷ He conquered Samosata and Zapetra. ⁵⁸ In retaliation the Muslims destroyed the city of Amorium and killed its entire population. ⁵⁹ Theophilos broke the thirty year peace treaty with the Bulgars and thus lost his fortresses at Adrianople. ⁶⁰ This disrupted an important military and trade route, the Via Militaris. ⁶¹ Following Theophilos' death, his wife Theodora reigned in the name of the only just a few year old Michael. ⁶² She reintroduced the worship of images, which had been forbidden under emperors Leo and Michael, and proceeded harshly against its opponents and the Paulicians. ⁶³ The Paulician Karbeas fled with several thousand of his fellow believers to the sovereign Arabian territories. ⁶⁴ Yet another example of how people are being punished solely for their religious convictions.

⁶⁵ In the Frankish Empire Charles' coronation as emperor caused much excitement. ⁶⁶ His son Louis succeeded him and granted the Jews various reliefs. ⁶⁷ He ordered that the Jews' slaves were not permitted to be baptised as the Jews were not allowed to own Christians as slaves. ⁶⁸ Louis crowned his son Lothair as

co-regent; his other sons Pepin and Louis were given Aquitaine and the eastern part of the Frankish Empire respectively. ⁶⁹ Louis' nephew Bernard felt this threatened his reign in Italy and staged an uprising against his uncle. ⁷⁰ The revolt was suppressed; Louis had Bernard blinded. ⁷¹ As Bernard died of his injuries, Louis publicly did penance. ⁷² He was twice removed from his office and reinstated; his sons Louis and Charles forged an alliance against their brother Lothair.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 4

¹ *The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.*

² The Frankish Empire was divided into three parts at Verdun. ³ Lothair, in turn, subdivided his realm of Middle Francia, Lotharii Regnum, between his three sons. ⁴ After Lothair the younger's death, half of Lorraine, the northern region, fell to the eastern Frankish Empire, the other half to the western Frankish Empire. ⁵ The ruler of the latter, Charles, called the Bald, conquered Italy and was crowned emperor. ⁶ Following the death of Louis, Rex Germaniae, the eastern Frankish Empire, was also subdivided among his three sons. ⁷ His son Charles asserted himself first as emperor of the whole eastern and eventually also of the western Frankish Empire. ⁸ At this time the Franks and other countries had to withstand attacks from the Vikings. ⁹ These tall men from the north preferably attacked the rich monasteries in Ireland, Scotland and England. ¹⁰ At first, they had vanished as fast as they had appeared; now they started to spend the winters there. ¹¹ The Anglo-Saxon king Alfred successfully protected East Anglia against the Norsemen. ¹² Their tribal chief Guthrum, who had himself baptised, established the borders of his *Danelaw* territory together with the Anglo Saxons. ¹³ In the west, the Vikings discovered new islands suitable for colonisation. ¹⁴ They also settled on the continent, particularly in the estuaries of major rivers. ¹⁵ After yet another of their raids against Paris, the Frankish king Charles paid tributes to them and ceded Burgundy as a pledge. ¹⁶ The Vikings' attempts to settle in Hispania were frustrated by the Muslims; thereafter the Vikings attacked Italy and northern Africa. ¹⁷ Those seafarers from the north, who used to refer to themselves as the "Rhos", invaded the interior via the rivers. ¹⁸ They traded with the Byzantine Empire.

¹⁹ In Byzantium the emperor Michael reigned; his counsels being his uncle Bardas and the patriarch Photios. ²⁰ Several decades later the Byzantines resumed their warfare against the Arabs. ²¹ But they had to retreat when the Rhos unexpectedly

appeared outside Constantinople. ²² Their attacks induced the patriarch of Constantinople to missionise the heathen enemies. ²³ The dissemination of Christianity was a pretext for expanding the realm. ²⁴ Here the paths of the West-Frankish and East-Byzantine missionaries crossed. ²⁵ The tribe of the Hunno-Bulgars, whose realm bordered Byzantium, refused Christianisation. ²⁶ For political reasons, their khagan Boris eventually decided to accept the Byzantine rite of Christianity.

²⁷ Byzantium also dispatched its evangelisers to the Khazars: the philosophy teacher Constantine and his brother the diplomat and lawyer Methodius of Thessaloniki. ²⁸ The experienced Constantine had already worked earlier as a missionary among the Arabs, at the court of Caliph al-Mutawakkil. ²⁹ It was al-Mutawakkil who had the Kaaba restored and beautified. ³⁰ To escape from danger, Constantine and Methodius sailed to the peninsula of Tauris. ³¹ Here Constantine discovered the grave of the Roman bishop and martyr Clement. ³² After their mission to the Khazars, Constantine and Methodius were dispatched to the Moravian Empire. ³³ Rastislav, its ruler, feared the increasing Frankish influence and asked Byzantium to send him missionaries. ³⁴ Constantine created a new alphabet for the Slavic language, called the Glagolitic alphabet. ³⁵ The brothers translated the liturgical books into Slavic. ³⁶ Their mission in Moravia was successful and they soon found candidates suitable to be ordained as priests. ³⁷ At the Council of Venetia the two missionaries campaigned for the Slavic language to be permitted at mass. ³⁸ While there, Constantine and Methodius were summoned to Pope Nicholas in Rome.

³⁹ Prior to this, Pope Nicholas had declared the election of the Byzantine patriarch Photios as invalid. ⁴⁰ In turn Photios excommunicated the pope through an open letter to the eastern patriarchs. ⁴¹ In this he criticised several customs of the western Church, among them the marriage ban for priests, fasting on Saturdays and particularly the use of the filioque in the Creed. ⁴² Meanwhile the government in Byzantium was overthrown; Emperor Michael was murdered and the throne usurped by Basil. ⁴³ When Patriarch Photios banned him from attending mass on the grounds that Basil had committed regicide, Basil removed him from office. ⁴⁴ Then he appointed Ignatius in his stead. ⁴⁵ Thus Basil won the radicals as well as the new pope Adrian over to his side. ⁴⁶ Photios was exiled without being permitted to defend himself at the Council of Constantinople. ⁴⁷ Basil adopted various measures to force the Jews to be baptised. ⁴⁸ When Constantine and Methodius brought the relics of St. Clement to Rome, the citizens and Pope Adrian welcomed them enthusiastically. ⁴⁹ In his papal bull *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, Adrian confirmed the use of the Slavic language in the liturgy. ⁵⁰ Constantine had fallen

ill and entered a Greek convent where he adopted the name Cyril. ⁵¹ Adrian appointed Methodius as archbishop of the restored diocese of Pannonia and as papal legate for the Slavic tribes. ⁵² During a revolution in Moravia, Svatopluk delivered his uncle Rastislav to the eastern Franks. ⁵³ Methodius was also arrested and only released when Pope John personally intervened. ⁵⁴ After Methodius' death, Bishop Wiching became archbishop of Moravia; he had all Slavic liturgical books destroyed and banished the priests who practised the Slavic rite. ⁵⁵ Most of the advocates of Slavonic as the liturgical language moved to the Bulgarian Empire where Church Slavonic was stipulated as the official national language at the People's Council of Preslav. ⁵⁶ The Croats had already adopted the Christian faith a long time ago; Duke Branimir was endorsed by Pope John as the ruler of Croatia. ⁵⁷ The Slavs called the Nordic Viking tribes Varangians. ⁵⁸ By river, the Varangians advanced ever further into the interior where they founded trading centres. ⁵⁹ They were polygamous and also took Slavic women as their wives. ⁶⁰ Oleg, their ruler, conquered large territories and the East-Slavs coexisted with the Varangians in his principality. ⁶¹ He thus came into conflict with the Khazars to whom the East-Slavs had so far paid peace tributes. ⁶² The Khazars therefore obstructed the trade between the Varangians and the Arabs; this mostly concerned the trade in silver. ⁶³ The Khazars also opposed Islamisation; many of them practiced Judaism and some also Christianity thanks to Constantine's mission.

⁶⁴ Discord was rampant inside the Arabian Abbasid dynasty. ⁶⁵ Some governors of the Arabian provinces used this to their advantage and took over the administrative districts. ⁶⁶ A change of government therefore ensued in Egypt. ⁶⁷ The Aghlabids ousted the Khazars from their dominant position in North Africa. ⁶⁸ The Persian Tahirid Dynasty in Khorasan was overthrow by the Saffarid Dynasty. ⁶⁹ Thereafter the Samanids were appointed as governors; Bukhara became the capital. ⁷⁰ The black slaves revolted several times against the Abbasids. ⁷¹ These slaves from East-Africa were condemned to hard labour – the draining of the salt marshes of the downstream Euphrates. ⁷² During one of these uprisings, led by Ali ibn Muhammad, they even succeeded in founding their own state before being defeated by the Abbasids.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 5

1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

2 Peoples and tribes have been changing the world map for centuries. 3 There were endless migrations, wars and conquests as well as intermixing of ethnic groups and religions. 4 On the one hand these were terrible times filled with suffering,

bloodshed and famine, on the other new acquaintances, alliances and friendships were forged. ⁵ The world is no longer what it had been during the era of the Roman emperors when Rome had ruled close to the entire world. ⁶ Many tribes have settled and established themselves in the community of peoples. ⁷ They have observed the government and ruling systems of the Romans, the Byzantines and the Persians, adapted them to their own needs and have become important political factors. ⁸ But now each nation strives to win as much land, power and influence as possible; something they have learned from the Romans. ⁹ Thus starts a competition. ¹⁰ Franks, Anglo-Saxons, Norsemen, Bulgars and many other peoples take part. ¹¹ Most of them are ruled by a king or a duke.

¹² Meanwhile the Jews experienced somewhat more peaceful times. ¹³ Except the Catholic Church, which persecuted them every so often, and the Muslims, who sporadically did the same, nobody bothered with the Chosen People. ¹⁴ As the Jews could not reclaim the Promised Land, they increasingly scattered around the world. ¹⁵ The Frankish emperor Charles sent them a particularly tempting invitation which held the prospect of important posts. ¹⁶ Now Jews from all corners of the globe flock to the Frankish Empire. ¹⁷ Over generations their language has diversified to such an extent that they can barely communicate with each other. ¹⁸ Roman, Babylonian and Aramaic Hebrew blend with the Frankish dialects. ¹⁹ Thus a new language develops which nearly all Jews and the majority of the Franks can understand. ²⁰ Apart from the fact that they are living in the diaspora and that the Byzantine emperor Romanos urges them to accept the Christian faith, this could be called a favourable time for the Jews.

²¹ The Christian Church and its standing among the peoples does not fare as well. ²² Morals at the top of the Church hierarchy present a stark contrast to the Christian identity and its Jewish roots. ²³ For whatever reason, popes have started to keep women. ²⁴ They not only use them for their own entertainment, but also abuse them to further their political aims. ²⁵ In turn, some of their mistresses use the popes and the Church for their own goals. ²⁶ A spectacle for the world, a scandal for the genuinely faithful. ²⁷ Loose morals such as these increase the probability of a further Church schism. ²⁸ But perhaps this may also lead to reflection and healing inside the Church.

²⁹ The Arabs have entirely different worries. ³⁰ They are fighting on several fronts for the propagation of their faith. ³¹ Sadly, they also pursue their own, very secular interests. ³² There are several religious Islamic streams whose representatives are fighting each other. ³³ Just as in Christianity, it is also calamitous for Islam when one's own ideas take precedence over or are treated as equal to the idea of

spreading the faith. ³⁴ This inevitably ends in shame or a catastrophe. ³⁵ Let us now turn our attention to the individual events of the present era. ³⁶ True to our style we shall not describe these in detail and chronological order. ³⁷ Those readers interested in history will find enough material concerning these with the contemporary historians. ³⁸ They include the learned Benedictine abbot Regino of Prüm who chronicles the time from Jesus' birth to the current Frankish rulers.

³⁹ Muslims conquered Thessaloniki, the second largest Byzantine city. ⁴⁰ Following the Arabs' conquest of the island of Melita, they renamed and Islamised it. ⁴¹ Abdullah al-Akbar founded the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt. ⁴² Abd ar-Rahman, the third of his name in the Umayyad Dynasty, became the Emir of Cordoba. ⁴³ Ordonez of the kingdom of Leon was his opponent on the Iberian Peninsula. ⁴⁴ He first defeated Abd ar-Rahman's troops. ⁴⁵ Three years later, the Leonid Christian army was beaten by the Moors. ⁴⁶ The Muslim soldiers crossed the Pyrenees. ⁴⁷ Abd ar-Rahman also captured Pamplona, the capital of the Kingdom of Navarre. ⁴⁸ Despite the resistance of the Fatimids, Abd ar-Rahman had himself proclaimed as the autonomous Caliph of Cordoba. ⁴⁹ With his troops he dominated the north-west of Africa. ⁵⁰ When he suffered a major defeat against Leon, he had his military commanders crucified. ⁵¹ Abd ar-Rahman promoted science, the arts and agriculture. ⁵² Beside Constantinople and Baghdad, Cordoba became one of the largest cities. ⁵³ Meanwhile the Hadith collections of the scholars al-Bukhari and ibn al-Hajjaj become known in the Arabic world. ⁵⁴ Al-Bukhari's theological opinion differed from the predominant belief and he had to leave Baghdad. ⁵⁵ The Islamic philosopher al-Kindi propagated the mathematical mode of thinking in philosophy, i.e. logic. ⁵⁶ When the Persian Buyid Dynasty occupied Baghdad, it gained control over the Caliphate. ⁵⁷ Thus the caliphs lost their political power and were merely considered to be the spiritual leaders of the Sunni Muslims.

⁵⁸ In Europe the Hungarian nomadic tribes endangered other peoples. ⁵⁹ They united under Arpad, the tribal chief of the Magyars. ⁶⁰ After devastating Moravia, they occupied the wealthy Pannonia. ⁶¹ From there they carried out countless raids, particularly of the Frankish Empire and Italy. ⁶² Under their Grand Prince Zoltan they suffered their first major defeat through the east Frankish king Henry at the Battle of Riade. ⁶³ This powerful, expansionist-minded ruler was sworn the oath of fealty by the Bohemian duke Vaclav, whereupon his brother Boleslav had him assassinated. ⁶⁴ Through consolidating their territory, the Magyars separated the northern Slavs from the southern Slavs. ⁶⁵ Tomislav, Duke of Croatia, successfully foiled the Magyar's attacks. ⁶⁶ Pope John also confirmed him as King of Croatia. ⁶⁷ Tomislav was an ally of the Byzantines in the war against the Bulgars. ⁶⁸ The

Bulgars also tried to subdue Serbian tribes, but Prince Caslav successfully defended their autonomy. ⁶⁹ Following the death of the Byzantine emperor Leo, his underage son Constantine took the throne. ⁷⁰ Constantine devoted himself to state organisation and commissioned works regarding court ceremony and governing the empire. ⁷¹ A voluminous reference book of terms was created under his orders. ⁷² Latin as the second language for the military and the administration was replaced by Greek.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 6

¹ *By your hand save me from such people, LORD, from those of this world whose reward is in this life. May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies; may their children gorge themselves on it, and may there be leftovers for their little ones.*

² Christianity and Islam spread ever more intensively among the peoples. ³ Christianity now spans from the northern islands as far as Byzantium. ⁴ An exception are the Slavs in eastern Albingia who continue to cling to their heathen gods. ⁵ The Poljan tribes, some Norsemen tribes as well as the tribes of the Rus and the Hungarians eventually became Christian. ⁶ Byzantium once again became an important major power. ⁷ The Byzantine emperor Constantine maintains diplomatic relations with the caliphate of Cordoba, the Frankish Empire and the Rus. ⁸ The East-Frankish ruler Otto has been crowned emperor and now also exercises his political power over the papacy. ⁹ Some popes still keep mistresses while the caliphs of Cordoba have male harems. ¹⁰ The Fatimids now become a dominant power in Egypt, Syria and Arabia. ¹¹ The city of al-Qahirah in Egypt is expanded into an important centre. ¹² The Jews frequently act as mediators in the trade between East and West.

¹³ Let us now turn our attention to Byzantium. ¹⁴ At the age of forty, the Byzantine emperor Constantine became absolute ruler. ¹⁵ He extended numerous powers to his courtiers and generals. ¹⁶ He also passed laws to protect soldiers and peasants. ¹⁷ He successfully defended Byzantium against the Hungarians and the Arabs. ¹⁸ Olga, the widowed regent of the Rus, visited Constantinople where she converted to Christianity and adopted the baptismal name Helena. ¹⁹ The indigenous tribes did not understand her actions and she therefore approached the East-Frankish ruler Otto for help. ²⁰ He dispatched a monk called Adalbert to the land of the Rus. ²¹ But Adalbert's missionary work failed and he returned without having achieved anything. ²² Later he was appointed Archbishop of Magdeburg. ²³ Olga's son Sviatoslav conquered the land of the Khazars and the capital of the

Bulgars. ²⁴ Meanwhile John, a general of Armenian descent, called Tzimiskes, was proclaimed emperor. ²⁵ A peace treaty was negotiated with the Rus whereby Byzantium gained territories in Bulgaria, Hungary and the trading city of Chersoneso. ²⁶ Grand Duke Vladimir of Rus later occupied Chersoneso to force his marriage to the sister of the Byzantine emperor Basil. ²⁷ Before the nuptials, Vladimir had to convert to orthodox Christianity and permit the Christianisation of the Rus. ²⁸ The Bulgars used internal disputes in Byzantium to resume their fight for independence. ²⁹ Tsar Samuel attained fame through his successes during the hostilities.

³⁰ In Western Europe, Otto, Duke of Saxony, made a name for himself as a ruler. ³¹ At his coronation as King of East-Francia at the cathedral of Aachen he was also appointed as the Archbishop of Mainz. ³² He made his family members dukes and also wanted to recruit bishops and abbots for his politics. ³³ He financed his political plans with profits from the Saxon silver mines. ³⁴ Otto arrested the advance of the Hungarians at the Battle of Lechfeld near Augsburg. ³⁵ Pope John asked him for help in his fight against King Berengar. ³⁶ The pope was a grandchild of the influential courtesan Marozia. ³⁷ He became pope at the young age of eighteen and kept a female harem at the Lateran Palace. ³⁸ Otto helped the pope and was rewarded by being made Roman Emperor. ³⁹ He confirmed claims and rights of ownership to the pope. ⁴⁰ At the same time, however, he stipulated that the pope had to swear an oath of allegiance to the emperor before his consecration. ⁴¹ After Otto had left Rome, Pope John allied himself with Berengar's son who had fled. ⁴² The angry Otto once more travelled to Rome to punish the pope, but the pope died before Otto had reached the city.

⁴³ The archdiocese of Magdeburg, founded by Otto, became the centre of missionising the east. ⁴⁴ Otto frequently celebrated Easter at Quitilingburg where he also received delegates from all of Europe. ⁴⁵ He endeavoured to also rule over the entire imperial Church. ⁴⁶ This was opposed by a reform movement modelled on the ideals of the monastery of Cluny. ⁴⁷ The aim was to achieve the monasteries' inner piety and independence from imperial authority. ⁴⁸ Otto was succeeded by his son of the same name who had already been crowned as co-regent before his father's death and been married to the Byzantine princess Theophanu. ⁴⁹ Several uprisings occurred during Otto's reign. ⁵⁰ King Harald of Denmark, who had converted to Christianity, invaded northern Albingia. ⁵¹ He married the daughter of the Obotrite ruler and supported the Slavic tribes in their successful rebellion against the East-Franks in eastern Albingia. ⁵² Emperor Otto was defeated by the Arabs in southern Italy and died in Rome. ⁵³ After his death, his widow Theophanu reigned and after her death his father's widow Empress Adelaide. ⁵⁴ His son, also called Otto, took the throne at age fourteen. ⁵⁵ Despite resistance, he made Rome

the centre of the realm. ⁵⁶ He appointed his cousin Bruno of Caranthia as pope, who then adopted the name Gregory. ⁵⁷ Otto referred to himself as the “servant of Jesus Christ” and later as “servant of the Apostles”.

⁵⁸ The Muslim territories also experienced various political problems. ⁵⁹ The Qarmatians founded their own state in the northeast of the Arabian Peninsula. ⁶⁰ They threatened the pilgrims to Mecca. ⁶¹ They also stole the Black Stone of the Kaaba, al-Hajar al-Aswad. ⁶² It took twenty years before the Meccans were able to reclaim it for a large ransom after mediation by the Fatimids. ⁶³ The Fatimids took Egypt from the Ikhshidid Dynasty. ⁶⁴ Under the rule of Caliph Abu Tamin Ma’ad al-Mu’izz they also ruled Mecca and Medina for a short period. ⁶⁵ The Garamantian military leader Abu Ali al-Hasan conquered Ramla and Damascus. ⁶⁶ Several battles were fought between the Qarmatians and the Fatimids. ⁶⁷ The Fatimids won and eventually occupied Syria and the former Eretz Israel. ⁶⁸ Caliph al-Mu’izz chose the city al-Qahira al-Muizziya as his residence and replaced the old currency with the gold dinar. ⁶⁹ He also built a fleet to protect sea trade. ⁷⁰ Furthermore he built an education centre for Ismaili missionaries in the capital. ⁷¹ Al Mu’izz was tolerant towards the Copts. ⁷² He allowed them to hold high-ranking posts and freely practise their religion.

Part FOUR

CHAPTER 7

¹ *I am a stranger on earth; do not hide your commands from me.*

² Scientific and economic progress contribute towards a higher life expectancy and therefore a growing population. ³ The village becomes an important economic factor; after the nobility and the clergy, the peasants constitute an important social class. ⁴ The rulers want to consolidate their power with the help of religion. ⁵ The peoples in northern Europe and in Asia are gradually Christianised. ⁶ The predominant part of Europe is under the influence of Catholic Rome. ⁷ Orthodox Christendom dominates eastern and southern Europe with Constantinople as its centre. ⁸ The empire of the Fatimids is experiencing a great economic upturn. ⁹ Culture and science are also promoted. ¹⁰ The Seljuk have occupied the Persian territory and threaten the neighbouring countries. ¹¹ Some expect the end of the world, others claim that the Creator alone knows when that day dawns. ¹² Many are seized by missionary fever but are not inspired by brotherly love in their endeavours. ¹³ Eretz Israel is still ruled by strangers. ¹⁴ On the Iberian Peninsula events unfold rapidly. ¹⁵ The Umayyad caliphs on the throne of Cordoba quickly change succession. ¹⁶ Instead of Caliph Hisham, the chamberlain Abu Amir Muhammad ibn Abi Amir ruled de facto. ¹⁷ He recruited many new mercenaries

from the Berber tribe and plundered Christian realms on the Iberian Peninsula with his army. ¹⁸ Thus the pilgrimage site of Compostela was destroyed and its treasures brought to Cordoba. ¹⁹ Abu Amir Muhammad reinforced his rule in Northwest Africa whereupon he adopted the title al-Mansur Billah, a title reserved for caliphs only. ²⁰ Tensions developed in the Andalusian army between the Arab soldiers and the Slavic slaves. ²¹ The caliphate of Cordoba disintegrated into small kingdoms and principalities. ²² The Berber Hammudids ousted the Umayyads from the caliphate of Cordoba. ²³ In Seville the Abbadids founded a mighty empire.

²⁴ The Roman emperor Otto supported the candidacy of the Frankish teacher Gerbert of Aurillac for the papacy. ²⁵ Aurillac was a major scholar and as Pope Sylvester he introduced Arabic characters as numbers. ²⁶ Together with Emperor Otto he planned a renewal of the Roman Empire jointly ruled by emperor and pope. ²⁷ Both supported the foundation of the two Christian realms of Regnum Hungariae and Regnum Poloniae. ²⁸ Bishop Vojtech of Prague, also known as Adalbert, undertook a mission journey to Hungary. ²⁹ There he confirmed the duke Stephen. ³⁰ Stephen was crowned King of Hungary by the papal legate. ³¹ As Adalbert was murdered by the Prussians during his mission, the Polish duke Boleslav bought his remains and had them interred in the city of Gniezno. ³² Soon after Vojtech was canonised and even emperor Otto went on a pilgrimage to his grave. ³³ Here he met Duke Boleslav. ³⁴ Gniezno became an archbishopric and Radim, Vojtech's half-brother, its first archbishop. ³⁵ The Bavarian duke Henry followed Otto onto the emperor's throne. ³⁶ Henry's goal was the renewal of the Frankish Empire. ³⁷ Poland gained Lusatia; Bohemia was absorbed into Henry's realm. ³⁸ Together with his wife Cunegund he helped found the episcopal see of Bamberg. ³⁹ As far as Church politics were concerned, Henry preferred sponsoring bishops rather than independent monastic orders. ⁴⁰ Although he presented the abbey of Cluny with his imperial orb, he nonetheless obstructed the Clunaic reforms in his realm. ⁴¹ Odilo, a respected scholar, was abbot in Cluny at this time. ⁴² He advocated an armistice during Christian festivals. ⁴³ In Cluny, Odilo introduced the commemoration day of All Soul's Day. ⁴⁴ He doubled the number of monasteries subordinate to Cluny. ⁴⁵ In the city of Cologne the building of a synagogue commenced. ⁴⁶ After an earthquake in Rome on a Good Friday, the Jews were accused of host desecration, tortured and burnt at the stake. ⁴⁷ Conrad succeeded Henry as the ruler of the East Franconian Empire. ⁴⁸ The Danish ruler Canute also attended Conrad's coronation. ⁴⁹ King Canute defeated England and the allied armies of the Norwegian Olaf and the Swede Anund Jakob. ⁵⁰ Under Conrad's reign the former East-Frankish monarchy was given the name Imperium Romanum, ⁵¹ The Cathedral of Speyer was built on his orders. ⁵² Conrad's son

Henry supported Church reforms. ⁵³ The Rus maintained political and economic relations with the Roman Empire and Byzantium. ⁵⁴ Grand Prince Jaroslav formed an alliance with the Roman emperor Conrad. ⁵⁵ Jaroslav first ruled in Novgorod, later he also asserted himself against his brother Svjatopolk and his allies in Kiev. ⁵⁶ Byzantium defeated the Bulgarian Empire at the Battle of Kleidion, then the Georgians. ⁵⁷ After the death of Emperor Basil, Byzantium was threatened by the Seljuk. ⁵⁸ After the Battle of Dandanaqan they replaced the Ghaznavids as rulers of the Persian territories.

⁵⁹ The Fatimids as the overlords in North-Africa have their principal seat in al-Qahirah in Egypt. ⁶⁰ West of Egypt, Ifriqiya is ruled by the Zirid Dynasty. ⁶¹ Those two dynasties fell out when the Zirids recognised the Abbasids of Baghdad as the rightful caliphs and thus changed from the Shiite to the Sunni denomination. ⁶² Although Fatimids are Shiites, the majority of the Egyptian population is Sunni; Coptic Christians also live here. ⁶³ The Fatimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered many non-Muslim buildings to be destroyed, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the synagogue in al-Qahirah. ⁶⁴ He issued several decrees regarding the purity of the Islamic faith and built the House of Wisdom in al-Qahira. ⁶⁵ A group within the Islamic Shia orientation even started to worship him as a god. ⁶⁶ Supporters of this doctrine were called the Druze after their zealous missionary from Bukhara. ⁶⁷ The famous physician and scholar Ibn Sina, known in Europe as Avicenna, also comes from Bukhara. ⁶⁸ Recently the Arabic translations of the Greek philosophers and natural scientists are also being used by Jewish scholars. ⁶⁹ The Rabbis begin to systemise the Jewish teachings. ⁷⁰ Saadia ben Joseph's religious philosophy contributes to the dogmatisation of Judaism. ⁷¹ The scholars want to safeguard the Tanakh from misinterpretations. ⁷² The Tanakh version of the Tiberian school with annotations and vocalisation marks, asserts itself.

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 1

¹ *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

² Much has to be currently reported by the chronicler, but little to rejoice. ³ All the more reason for us to mention the glad tidings first. ⁴ An increasing number of people on earth believe in the LORD. ⁵ This refers to the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims. ⁶ Friendly relations, mutual respect and tolerance even develop in some places. ⁷ In Spain the Jews enjoy the favour of King Alfonso. ⁸ In England the Jews who followed William from Normandy establish several large

settlements. ⁹ *Kanaph ha'aretz* is what the Jews call the island of England: corner of the earth. ¹⁰ The Jews live unmolested and in harmony with the Muslim population in many Muslim governed regions. ¹¹ And that already concludes the good news.

¹² Some hostilities also exist between the groups mentioned, and where that is not yet the case, begrudgers, zealots and adventurous agitators ensure there soon will be. ¹³ In Granada many Jews were killed by Muslims who envied their wealth. ¹⁴ In his writings the Church reformer Damiani puts forward spurious theological grounds to justify the persecution of Jews. ¹⁵ Nearly every Christian generation produces scholars who claim to know exactly why the Jews should be persecuted. ¹⁶ Yet Christendom has to face a multitude of internal problems. ¹⁷ On the one hand there is widespread immorality, disorder and chaos, in the lower as well as the higher rungs of the clergy, on the other tension and schisms grow between the Eastern and Western Churches. ¹⁸ The mutual excommunication between Pope Leo and Patriarch Michael is just an outward sign of a profound and persistent division. ¹⁹ As early as the first centuries discord and schisms were apparent between East and West. ²⁰ Partly responsible was the language barrier. ²¹ While Greek was considered the official Church language in the eastern part of the empire right from the beginning, Latin asserted itself in the western part. ²² But the Greek speaking scholars regarded Latin as barbarian. ²³ Depending on the region, the sacred scriptures, liturgies and other writings were composed in or translated into Greek or Latin respectively. ²⁴ Christian theologians and scholars, depending from which region they came, also had different schooling and varying viewpoints. ²⁵ In the East classical and philosophical education were valued whereas in the West the emphasis was on political and legal training. ²⁶ Furthermore the balance of power had changed with the relocation of the imperial seat from Rome to Constantinople. ²⁷ Opinions differed with regard to celibacy, redemption and the Creed. ²⁸ The decisive role, however, played the various claims to power, dogmatism and obstinacy.

²⁹ A schism had already emerged during the conflict between Pope Nicholas and Photios. ³⁰ The later Pope John eventually made peace with Photios again. ³¹ Now Patriarch Michael and Pope Leo have fallen out over the language of the liturgy, the sacramental bread and the Creed. ³² They have become enemies, cursed each other and now try to explain all this to the ordinary believers. ³³ But the rulers and the clergy have not lost sight of the Islamic peril either. ³⁴ In their wars against the Muslims the Christians had to surrender much of their territories. ³⁵ In the West they are threatened by the Muslims and in the East by the advancing Seljuks. ³⁶ Since the schism, the Christian rulers struggle to get the situation under control.

37 They are trying to stop the Muslims' advance while both sides strive to prove that they are right in matters of the faith. 38 Through exercising power and successful warfare one endeavours to show that God is on one's side. 39 In Jerusalem Muslims ousted hundreds of Christians from the city and banned them from access to their sacred sites. 40 The Seljuks conquered Baghdad and pressed ahead towards the West. 41 On taking Jerusalem, they killed a large part of its population. 42 Many Christians were also murdered in Armenia. 43 In Spain Muslims and Christians were engaged in fierce battles. 44 The Seljuks impeded the progress of Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. 45 A Byzantine Christian army was badly defeated by Muslim forces. 46 Emperor Michael even asked Pope Gregory for support. 47 The pope was too occupied with the investiture controversy, however. 48 A hostile stance against the Muslims rapidly spreads amongst the Christians in the West. 49 The animosity is additionally inflamed by zealous preachers. 50 To free Jerusalem from Muslim occupation at any price is first priority. 51 A willingness to go to war grows among the population, the Church and the rulers. 52 Some of these view war as an opportunity to gain dominion over Byzantium and the Muslims as well as solving the Jewish question worldwide. 53 Others are prepared to risk their lives to liberate the Holy Sites and make them once more accessible to all Christians. 54 A third group dreams of adventures, oriental treasures and spoils.

55 Emperor Alexios Komnenos was taken more seriously when he appealed to the West for help and was even prepared to reunite the Orthodox with the Roman Catholic Church. 56 The West responded in its own way. 57 Pope Urban, the cardinals, bishops and abbots decided to dispatch an army to the East. 58 The news was enthusiastically received among the general population and the nobility as well as adventurers and outlaws. 59 The Church was convinced of the righteousness and holiness of the venture. 60 Participants in the military campaign were being assured of numerous spiritual benefits in this life and in the afterlife. 61 Thus large crowds of people rapidly gathered from all social classes to form a rather disorganised army which then headed east. 62 Enthusiasm and Christian zeal abounded. 63 En-route this army acted in neither a humane nor a Christian manner. 64 Incited by some of the preachers they murdered the Jewish population wherever they could on the way. 65 Furthermore they looted castles and abbeys and did not show mercy to the peasants either. 66 When they reached Constantinople, Emperor Alexios, fearing for the safety of the city, had them quickly taken across the Bosphorus. 67 This army was soon after defeated by the Seljuks at Nicaea. 68 Meanwhile organised and orderly armies were assembled in the West and united in Constantinople. 69 This united army then successfully reached Jerusalem. 70 Turned half savage through battles and hunger, many of the soldiers committed

cruel atrocities and caused much suffering for the local population. ⁷¹ This army finally conquered Jerusalem. ⁷² Here, too, the soldiers butchered countless Muslims, Jews and even Syrian and Coptic Christians.

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 2

¹ *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness., like the stars for ever and ever.*

² The present era is characterised by Christian military campaigns. ³ Looting and killing are the order of the day in the name of whatever objectives. ⁴ Subsequently four Christian states gradually emerged. ⁵ First the County of Edessa and the Principality of Antioch. ⁶ After the city of Jerusalem had been conquered, it became the Kingdom of Jerusalem. ⁷ To reinforce the new kingdom, Pope Paschal called another military expedition in the name of the Faith. ⁸ However, the campaign was thwarted by an alliance of the usually warring Seljuks and Danishmends. ⁹ The Sultanate of Rum originated as a consequence of the Great Seljuk Empire being divided into several small states. ¹⁰ Following the defeat of the Seljuk emir of Tripoli, this is where the fourth Christian State, the County of Tripoli, was founded. ¹¹ Step by step the Kingdom of Jerusalem became the most dominant.

¹² The religious military campaigns caused an increase in the sea trade between Europe and Asia. ¹³ The Christian army's main ally was the independent Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia which had been founded by the Armenians who had fled from the Seljuks. ¹⁴ The European population grows in the newly emerged Christian States. ¹⁵ Many of the Europeans adopt the oriental way of life. ¹⁶ The indigenous people refer to them as "Franks". ¹⁷ The patriarchies in Antioch and Jerusalem are ruled by Latin patriarchs. ¹⁸ Several chivalric orders are founded during the religious wars. ¹⁹ These orders' essential tasks are tending the sick and wounded and safeguarding the pilgrims. ²⁰ They operated under the protection of Pope Paschal who exempted them from tithe payments. ²¹ Henry, the son of the Roman Emperor of the same name, took the Pope and several cardinals prisoner in St. Peter's Church in Rome. ²² He hoped this would force the right to investiture and secure the imperial crown for himself. ²³ But only under Pope Calixtus did he succeed to enter into a contract in Worms whereby the longstanding investiture controversy was ended. ²⁴ The contract was confirmed at the Lateran Council. ²⁵ The second Lateran Council prohibited simony and introduced celibacy for Roman Catholic priests. ²⁶ At this time new religious orders are established in Europe. ²⁷ Some of the already existing ones are being reformed. ²⁸ Pope Calixtus

endorsed the Cistercian Order which had emerged after the reformation of the Benedictine order at Citeaux. ²⁹ The community, founded by Norbert of Xanten in the valley of Prémontré, was also recognised by the Pope. ³⁰ The monks follow the Augustinian rule and the model of the early Church. ³¹ Some believers establish communities which do not conform to the official Church teachings. ³² In Western Europe it is predominantly the lay movement which has given itself the name “Friends of God”. ³³ Its doctrine is similar to that of the “Bogomils” from Bulgaria who are being persecuted in Byzantium. ³⁴ The Bogomils reject the Old Testament and are presumably influenced by Manichaeism. ³⁵ In Byzantium John of the Komnenos Dynasty took the throne. ³⁶ He defeated the invading Pechenegs as well as rebellious Serbians. ³⁷ John married the daughter of the Hungarian king Ladislaus; she took the name Irene after becoming empress. ³⁸ John concentrated his efforts on reconquering the lost territories in Anatolia. ³⁹ With the help of the Rum-Seljuks he defended the eastern border and tried to gain the rule over the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia and the new Christian states of Antioch and Edessa. ⁴⁰ John also attacked the Arabs in Syria, but was driven back at Aleppo.

⁴¹ Something remarkable occurred in Muslim ruled North-West Africa. ⁴² The local Islamic reformer Abu Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Tumart operated in the Atlas Mountains. ⁴³ He studied in Cordoba and travelled through Alexandria, Mecca and Baghdad. ⁴⁴ On his return he disseminated his doctrine about the absolute unity of God and predestination amongst the Berbers. ⁴⁵ Ibn Tumart alleged that he wanted to lead Islam back to its original form and to inspire inner depth in the Muslims. ⁴⁶ Although he did not convince the Almoravids of the validity of his doctrine, he did unite some tribes as the *al-Muwahhidun* community, the *Almohads*. ⁴⁷ Ibn Tumart was certain he was the infallible Mahdi called to restore faith and justice in the world. ⁴⁸ His death was kept a secret for quite some time. ⁴⁹ Abd al-Mu'min, his successor, led the Almohads to victory over the Almoravids. ⁵⁰ He acquired the title of caliph. ⁵¹ The Almohads rule North-West Africa, Ifriqiya and al-Andalus.

⁵² More trying times now begin for the Jews on the Iberian Peninsula. ⁵³ In the north the old anti-Jewish measures are re-introduced, in al-Andalus there is the fear of forced Islamisation. ⁵⁴ Jews in certain civic positions have to wear yellow clothing; all others blue clothing and a special cap. ⁵⁵ Those affected prefer fleeing to Christian regions or finding a new home under somewhat more lenient Islamic rulers in Africa. ⁵⁶ They do not dare returning to Eretz Israel where the hostile Christian knights are exercising their power. ⁵⁷ Pope Eugene called for a new campaign in retaliation for the conquest of the County Edessa by the Muslim governor Zengi of Mosul. ⁵⁸ The armies of the Frankish king Louis and the new

Roman emperor Conrad took part in the military expedition. ⁵⁹ Under their protection many pilgrims with wives and children accompanied them. ⁶⁰ The pope decided to extend the campaign to other regions as well; against the Arabs on the Iberian Peninsula and the heathens in north-east Europe. ⁶¹ England, which had been engaged in civil war for quite some time, entered its naval fleet. ⁶² It liberated Almeria and helped half the County of Portugal to proclaim itself as an independent kingdom. ⁶³ Many nobles and knights from the northern part of the Roman Empire took part in the military campaign against the heathens in eastern Europe. ⁶⁴ After much hardship, Conrad's and Louis' armies met at Nicaea in Anatolia. ⁶⁵ As the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos had entered into a peace treaty with the sultan of the Rum-Seljuks, the Christian soldiers received no military support from Byzantium. ⁶⁶ They did, however, ally themselves with the army of King Baldwin of Jerusalem and besieged Damascus. ⁶⁷ Disputes among the three Christian kings and their opponents' superiority led to the troops abandoning the campaign and returning home. ⁶⁸ King Louis blamed Byzantium for the failure and planned his revenge. ⁶⁹ Many soldiers and pilgrims remained in the Holy Land where they hoped for a better life. ⁷⁰ Some of them joined the Eremite communities on Mount Carmel. ⁷¹ There are still those who model their lifestyle on the Holy Scriptures. ⁷² One can only hope that they will eventually shine like the stars in the heavens for all eternity.

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 3

¹ If riches are a desirable possession in life, what is richer than wisdom who effects all things?

² Christians as well as Muslims are convinced that they have to wage holy wars against each other in God's name. ³ They also try to justify the Jews' persecution with the Holy Scriptures. ⁴ The popes promise all those who participate in the war against Islam forgiveness for their sins. ⁵ Simply put this means that whoever dies a martyr's death is guaranteed immediate entry into paradise. ⁶ For the Frankish royal couple the participation in one of these holy wars signifies the final breakup of their union. ⁷ After his return, Louis had his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine annulled. ⁸ She then wed Henry, from the House of Plantagenet, who had been crowned English monarch after a lengthy civil war. ⁹ This union secured England the rule over the western part of the Frankish Empire. ¹⁰ Louis acted as mediator during the conflict between the English king and Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. ¹¹ He consolidated his relationship with Pope Alexander by supporting him against the ambitions of Frederick, the new successor to the

Imperium Romanum. ¹² Frederick wanted to centralise the power over the vast territories of his empire and undermine the influence of the nobility. ¹³ He primarily concentrated on his battles with the North Italian cities which increasingly strived for autonomy. ¹⁴ The conflict led to the election of the antipope Paschal, who then crowned Frederick emperor and canonised Emperor Charles. ¹⁵ After his defeat in Northern Italy, however, Frederick had to make his peace with Pope Alexander again. ¹⁶ Pope Alexander issued new regulations regarding the Jews. ¹⁷ According to these, Jews could not employ any Christian servants, the testimony of a Christian always took precedence over that of a Jew; baptised Jews, however, could not be dispossessed of their property. ¹⁸ As the Jews were essentially reduced to trading in money as a profession, the Pope granted them the right to lend money against interest. ¹⁹ New cities were founded in Europe, many ostentatious cathedrals and palaces were built, educational institutes were founded, jousting tournaments and court celebrations were held. ²⁰ A number of lay movements emerged as a reaction to the Christians' feverish building, learning and splurging. ²¹ Their aim was a life in voluntary poverty and the practice of Christian virtues. ²² A merchant from Lyon by the name of Valdesius founded one such movement. ²³ Following a supernatural experience he devoted himself to studying the Bible. ²⁴ He even had the Vulgate translated into the common tongue to make the Bible accessible to ordinary people. ²⁵ Initially he was granted ecclesiastical permission to work as an itinerant preacher, but soon came into conflict with the Church.

²⁶ Measures to fight heretics were decided at the Council of Verona held by Pope Lucius and Emperor Frederick. ²⁷ The anathema did not only extend to the "Poor of Lyons" and the "Friends of God" but also to other groups of evangelists. ²⁸ Pope Innocent even went as far as prohibiting the common people from reading the Bible. ²⁹ Notwithstanding persecutions, unrests and wars, or particularly for that reason, many Christians, Muslims and Jews feel attracted to mysticism. ³⁰ An abbess from Bingen by the name of Hildegard wrote down her visions and revelations about naturopathy. ³¹ In the Muslim world so-called Sufi orders emerge. ³² A Sufi tries to get closer to God through mysticism. ³³ There is much talk of a Jewish philosopher and physician, Mosche ben Maimon. ³⁴ His family fled from the Almohads from Cordoba to Egypt. ³⁵ There Maimonides became Chief Rabbi of the Egyptian Jews and wrote commentaries to the Mishnah. ³⁶ He made a name for himself as physician to the Ayyubid sultan's family. ³⁷ In Egypt Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub took over from the Fatimids. ³⁸ Through Salah ad-Din's brother the Ayyubids also reigned over northern Nubia, the south of the Arabian Peninsula and Mecca and Medina. ³⁹ The Christians call Salah ad-Din *Saladin*; in turn the Muslims call the Christian occupying forces the Franks.

40 Saladin and the Franks are responsible for events which will be on posterity's mind for a long time to come.

41 In Eretz Israel, in the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, the originally European court nobility has already been in residence for three generations. 42 Lootings during the wars against the Muslim rulers of the Holy Land have made them comparatively rich; now they live a safe life and feel at home. 43 Peace and order are important to them. 44 They view the continuous new arrivals of pugnacious nobles and knights from Europe, eager to amass wealth and glory, as a threat to the lifestyle they have become accustomed to. 45 A conflict of interests develops between these two factions. 46 The Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos has just been defeated by the Rum-Seljuks. 47 This Muslim victory encouraged Saladin to repeatedly attack the Kingdom of Jerusalem. 48 As neither side decisively won, Saladin and Baldwin entered into a peace treaty. 49 After Baldwin's death, his brother-in-law, the Frankish Guy of Lusignan, asserted himself as his successor. 50 During Guy of Lusignan's reign, Count Reynald of Chatillon invaded Muslim territories and frequently raided Arabian caravans. 51 Thus the Franks broke their contract with Saladin. 52 Following several of these raids and after the Franks under Count Reynald neither apologised nor made reparations despite the King of Jerusalem's urging, Saladin's patience was finally exhausted. 53 He declared war and took his troops to Eretz Israel. 54 Quarrelling amongst each other and morally wrong, the Franks underestimated Saladin's wrath. 55 Moreover, they felt confident of victory as they believed in the magic powers of the Relic of the Cross they carried with them into battle. 56 The two armies met not far from the Sea of Galilee at the Battle of Hattin. 57 Only a few short hours later the Christian army had not only lost the battle but also the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Relic of the Cross. 58 Now it was only a question of time until Saladin's troops would arrive in Jerusalem. 59 Saladin, however, was not interested in destroying Jerusalem and annihilating the Franks. 60 Although completely in control of the situation, he entered into negotiations with the Franks to hit them where it hurt most – their purse strings. 61 Thus the Christian Franks could either leave Eretz Israel for a payment or be sold into slavery. 62 Jerusalem was once again in Muslim hands.

63 Some Christians base their assertion that God had now also permanently rejected Christendom, the way he had once apparently done to the Jews, on these events. 64 Others are of the opinion that God has rejected neither Christians nor Muslims nor Jews, but is patiently waiting for their reconciliation. 65 Yet how can such a reconciliation take place if the first two of these have been fighting over the land of the third for centuries and merely agree on one point – the persecution and elimination of the third? 66 The Holy Land, Eretz Israel, the land the LORD

has given to the Israelites for eternity, is being ruled, destroyed, restored and destroyed again by those who all pray to the same God. ⁶⁷ The Franks and the Western World should have learned their lesson by now. ⁶⁸ Or have they? ⁶⁹ No, they haven't, as yet new military campaigns against the Muslims are being started. ⁷⁰ Emperor Frederick drowns during one of these somewhere in Anatolia. ⁷¹ King Philip and King Richard fall out with each other on the way. ⁷² Eventually King Richard succeeds in persuading Saladin to allow the Christians access to the pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem.

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 4

¹ *Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him; all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.*

² Before we turn our attention to us humans and our actions, let us raise our hearts to the heavens and praise the LORD. ³ Blessed be you, Almighty eternal God, ruler of the world and creator of heaven and earth. ⁴ Blessed be your Holy name and the name of your Kingdom forever and ever. ⁵ Blessed be you for your covenant with the people through Noah. ⁶ We praise you because you elected Abraham. ⁷ We praise you with Hagar and Ishmael. ⁸ We worship you with Sarah and Isaac. ⁹ We love you with Miriam and Jeshua. ¹⁰ Blessed be you in all your chosen ones. ¹¹ Blessed be your name and your Kingdom in Moses, Joshua and Muhammad. ¹² Blessed are all Israelites, Christians and Muslims. ¹³ Grant them the grace, LORD, to see that you are their one common Father. ¹⁴ Open their eyes so they treasure and love each other. ¹⁵ Help them, Father, to proclaim your name through valiant deeds of brotherly love, through fasting and prayer. ¹⁶ Grant them the courage to rather gouge out their own eyes, to chop off their own hands, than those of the innocent and unconcerned. ¹⁷ Thank you, Father, for this beautiful world filled with mysteries, variety and the wonders of nature. ¹⁸ Your name shall be glorified in all the little, simple people whose deeds, unrecognised by the world, bear witness to your love. ¹⁹ May the schisms inside Islam, Christianity and Judaism be overcome by your grace. ²⁰ May it be your merciful will that peace and reconciliation come into their own so that Satan with his hatred, his pursuit of power and to divide people, loses his strength.

²¹ Fortunately there are always some people on earth who sacrifice their lives for this. ²² One of these is Giovanni Battista Bernardone, called Francis. ²³ His calling came straight from God, without others acting as intermediaries, and he saw his task as restoring small churches and chapels for which he begged the means and also used his father's merchandise. ²⁴ During a public trial against him, instigated

by his father, Francis took all his clothes off and entrusted his faith entirely to his Heavenly Father. ²⁵ He subsequently lived in strict seclusion, begged, tended to lepers and rejected all earthly goods. ²⁶ Together with the companions who had joined him, he proclaimed the gospel to all creatures to let everyone know of the immeasurably great love of the Heavenly Father. ²⁷ Another one with a calling is Dominic who wanted to fight the “heretics” with arguments instead of violence. ²⁸ He lived a life of poverty as an itinerant preacher as, in his opinion, the wealthy, secularised Church facilitated the development of heresies. ²⁹ But among the Muslims there are also people who bear testimony to God’s love. ³⁰ Among these are the Sufis Muhyiddin Muhammad ibn Arabi, Fariduddin Attar and Moinuddin Chishti. ³¹ These men were filled with love of the Highest and also awakened this love in others.

³² The Jew Moses ben Maimon became famous through his writings. ³³ Strict Jews, however, felt offended by his writings and burned most of them; Christian preaching orders also took umbrage and burned them too. ³⁴ The English man Robert of Reading suffered the same fate as Moses ben Maimon’s writings after he had converted to Judaism and married a Jewish woman. ³⁵ Many rabbis are currently moving to Eretz Israel to revive the Jewish communities whose populations had dwindled after the continuous religious military campaigns.

³⁶ Numerous battles also take place elsewhere. ³⁷ Temüjin from the Mongol tribe, the oldest son of Yesügai, one of their chiefs, attracted people’s attention. ³⁸ He had united the Mongolian tribes and acquired so much power that he convened a diet at the source of the Onon where he was appointed as the Genghis Khan by the tribal leaders. ³⁹ He and his troops were brutal; he defeated the Tangut, conquered Zhongdu, took Shandong and subjugated the Qara Khitai Empire. ⁴⁰ He also conquered Bukhara and Samarkand in retaliation for the Khwarezm Empire’s refusal to pay reparations. ⁴¹ Pope Innocent had different worries. ⁴² He sent out an army to fight the Albigensians. ⁴³ He deemed the Albigensians to be severe heretics. ⁴⁴ To prevent heresies, laypeople were not allowed to read the Bible in the native language or even own the book. ⁴⁵ The Staufer Frederick, King of Sicily, promised Pope Honorius to cede some territories to him and to reconquer Jerusalem. ⁴⁶ In turn, the pope crowned him as Roman Emperor. ⁴⁷ Frederick first consolidated the empire. ⁴⁸ At his court he employed scholars of various religions. ⁴⁹ When a delegation from the city of Fulda approached him with the accusation that certain Jews had killed children to bake Matzos with their blood, Frederick summoned Jewish scholars from all over the world to his court. ⁵⁰ They succeeded in rebutting the charges and having the accused released. ⁵¹ But from now on the Jews have to pay for the emperor’s protection. ⁵² Now they live as much in fear of

unsubstantiated accusations as they do of the Christians' jealousy of their imperial protection. ⁵³ Nonetheless, they still live as God's chosen people. ⁵⁴ Frederick wanted to keep his promise to the Pope and marched his army to Eretz Israel. ⁵⁵ His military campaign was successful and he negotiated a ten year truce with Sultan al-Kamil as well as the surrender of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. ⁵⁶ Sultan al-Kamil had already proposed a peace agreement at an earlier stage. ⁵⁷ This had been at the time when an army commanded by the papal legate Pelagius of Albano had besieged Damietta. ⁵⁸ The sultan had not only offered to relinquish Jerusalem, but also the Relic of the Cross. ⁵⁹ Pelagius and the representatives of the Italian Maritime Republics had rejected the offer, however, and refused any kind of negotiation. ⁶⁰ This is how much human values differ: some are prepared to sacrifice their lives for the Relic of the Cross while others are not even prepared to discuss the matter. ⁶¹ In the end one received neither and blamed Emperor Frederick. ⁶² In order to prevent being dethroned by the Church, Frederick imprisoned high-ranking Church dignitaries. ⁶³ His brother-in-law Richard of Cornwall also led a military campaign to the Holy Land ⁶⁴ He took advantage of the disputes between the Ayyubid cities Cairo and Damascus. ⁶⁵ First Damascus surrendered Galilee and then Cairo surrendered all the territories west of the Jordan, including Jerusalem, as far as Ashkelon.

⁶⁶ If the popes with their numerous invocations to fight against those of other faiths were in reality concerned about the salvation of people's souls or if they were hoping for glory and riches remains undecided. ⁶⁷ Although Frederick had been able to prevent his removal from the throne by the Church for a little while, it could now no longer be averted. ⁶⁸ At a council in Lyon Pope Innocent and the bishops passed judgement against Frederick. ⁶⁹ He was accused of many misdeeds, including his friendship with Muslims. ⁷⁰ Frederick ignored the Church's ruling and kept his office and title. ⁷¹ As if not enough armies had already marched to the Holy Land, the Frankish king Louis now also took his troops there, was defeated and taken prisoner by the Mamluks. ⁷² We started this account by praising the Highest and shall also conclude it thus: honour, praise and gratitude to the Eternal Father for all the suffering, joys and mercies of this era!

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 5

- ¹ *Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!*
- ² When will humans ever learn through God's word or at least their own history?
- ³ As they continuously strife for glory and riches, God has to keep intervening.
- ⁴ The nomadic tribe of the Mongols founded a new global empire, twice the size

of Alexander of Macedonia's realm. ⁵ This not only changed the map of the world, but also the lives of many peoples and individuals. ⁶ Most of their opponents were killed without mercy; only skilled artisans were abducted because they were needed for building the Mongol capital of Karakorum. ⁷ The Mongols conquered the Rus principalities and advanced as far as Poland and Hungary in the west. ⁸ The Europeans called them "Tatars" or "Tartars" because they seemed to come from hell – tartarus in Ancient Greek. ⁹ In reality the Tatars had been the Mongols first victims. ¹⁰ Power struggles developed amongst Genghis Khan's descendants and the vast empire was divided into four khanates. ¹¹ The Mongols are relatively tolerant with regard to religious freedom; under their rule their subjects practise various faiths: nature worship, Nestorianism, Buddhism. ¹² The orthodox Christian faith is tolerated in the Kipcak Khanate. ¹³ The Chagatai Khanate extends across Central Asia.

¹⁴ Khan Kublai rules the eastern part of the Mongol Empire. ¹⁵ He subdued the southern Chinese territory and named his entire realm Yuan. ¹⁶ Kublai appointed Dadu as his capital and introduced the square Phags-pa script. ¹⁷ He also tried to conquer the islands south of Cathay. ¹⁸ Kublai's mother, a follower of Nestorianism, wanted to invite several Christian clerics to the Mongolian Empire. ¹⁹ To this end an office for Christian affairs was established. ²⁰ Following the khan's request, Pope Gregory dispatched quite a number of clerics, but they never arrived. ²¹ Some time ago there had already been an attempt to missionise by William of Rubruck who had travelled to Karakorum on behalf of the Frankish king Louis. ²² Kublai's brother Hulagu conquered Persia and founded the Il-khanate. ²³ Hulagu practised mystical Buddhism, his wife was Christian. ²⁴ The Mongols entered into an alliance with the Christian kingdom of Cilicia. ²⁵ They wanted to overthrow the strong Muslim force in Baghdad and Jerusalem. ²⁶ When Hulagu's troops took Baghdad, they killed the Abbasid caliph. ²⁷ His seat was given to the Nestorian patriarch. ²⁸ Then the Mongol army advanced as far as Gaza in the hope the remainder of the Christian state in the Holy Land would come to their aid against the Muslims. ²⁹ The Latins, however, regarded the Mongols as "The Devil's Horsemen" and were not prepared to help them. ³⁰ Thus the Mongolian army of the Il-khanate had to rely on its own strength in the battle against then new Muslim rulers.

³¹ The Mamluks, former slaves of the Ayyubid Dynasty, took control over Egypt and Syria. ³² Hulagu came into conflict with the khan of the Kipcak Khanate who had converted to Islam and formed an alliance with the Mamluks. ³³ In Gallilee the Mamluks defeated Hulagu's army. ³⁴ Now it was merely a question of time until the Mamluks would also conquer the last Christian territory of Acre. ³⁵ This

finally happened nearly exactly two centuries after the first Christian military campaign against the Muslims. ³⁶ Byzantium profited the most from the Mongolian invasions. ³⁷ Its enemies, the Seljuks, became a vassal state of Il-Khanate and no longer attacked Byzantium. ³⁸ Following the Latins' conquest of Constantinople, the Byzantines relocated their capital to Nicaea. ³⁹ From there Emperor Michael succeeded in recapturing Constantinople. ⁴⁰ He endeavoured to enter into an alliance with the Latin Church as Pope Urban was promoting another military campaign against Byzantium. ⁴¹ Pope Gregory eventually addressed the cessation of the ecclesiastical schism and the situation in the Holy Land at the Council of Lyon. ⁴² A Franciscan friar with the monastic name Bonaventura was commissioned to prepare the council. ⁴³ At the council he defended the existence of mendicant orders. ⁴⁴ Also represented was a Mongolian delegation of the Il-Khanate; the pope's death after the council, however, disrupted any collaboration between the Mongols and the Europeans.

⁴⁵ The unification with the Latins was forced onto the Greek side by Emperor Michael; the majority of the orthodox Christians still continued to refuse it. ⁴⁶ On his way to the council Bonaventura's friend, the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, died and left a large legacy of theological and philosophical writings. ⁴⁷ In his *Summa Theologica* he demanded excommunication and the death penalty for heretics. ⁴⁸ His Order was commissioned by the Pope with heretical persecution. ⁴⁹ Torture was permitted to obtain a confession. ⁵⁰ Bizarre accusations against the Jews led to cruel persecutions in Europe. ⁵¹ As one of the many examples we cite the Jews who were burned alive in the synagogue in Munichen. ⁵² After Frederick's death, the Imperium Romanum experiences a period of weak kings. ⁵³ The most powerful ruler, even without the emperor's crown, was the King of Bohemia and Duke of Austria Ottokar Premysl. ⁵⁴ He annexed several territories of the Roman Empire. ⁵⁵ Ottokar endorsed some Jewish rights, among them their autonomous municipal administration and property protection. ⁵⁶ He was, however, also one of the first rulers to invite the Inquisition to his realm. ⁵⁷ Ottokar also participated in a military campaign to Christianise the Prussians. ⁵⁸ The expedition was led by the imperial chivalric order *Ordo Teutonicus*, which had relocated its headquarters from Acre to Europe. ⁵⁹ As further conquests towards the east were thwarted by the Mongols, the order founded its own state on Prussian territory.

⁶⁰ Count Rudolf of Habsburg was elected King of the Romans. ⁶¹ The Habsburg's reign in Austria and Styria commenced with his victory over the Bohemian King Ottokar. ⁶² Rudolf was, however, unsuccessful in attaining the title of emperor. ⁶³ He even promised Pope Gregory to take part in a new military campaign to the Holy Land. ⁶⁴ A public disputation took place in Spain between the Jews and the

Christians. ⁶⁵ It was held in the presence of the Spanish king and the highest-ranking representatives of the Dominican and Franciscan orders. ⁶⁶ Rabbi Moses ben Nachman effectively defended the Jewish view. ⁶⁷ Yet he still had to leave Spain and went on to consolidate the Jewish communities in Jerusalem and Acra. ⁶⁸ Meanwhile England was also no longer a safe place for the Jews. ⁶⁹ King Edward, who had participated in the last Christian war of conquest against the Muslims, had returned to his own country. ⁷⁰ He restricted the Jews' money-lending business and tried to introduce them to agriculture and trade. ⁷¹ After the issue of the new papal bull the English Jews had to wear a recognisable yellow sign on their clothing. ⁷² Some years later all the Jews in England were dispossessed of their property and then expelled.

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 6

¹ *Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me.*

² Asia is predominantly ruled by Mongols, Mamluks and Ottomans. ³ Before he died, the Mongol khan Kublai made Buddhism the state religion of the Yuan Empire. ⁴ Timur, his successor, promoted the teachings of Confucius. ⁵ He also allowed the Christian missionary John of Montecorvino to operate freely. ⁶ The Franciscan attempted to unite the Nestorian Christians with Rome. ⁷ Furthermore he wanted to convert the heathen Mongols to Christianity. ⁸ To this end he translated the New Testament and the Psalms into the language of the Mongols. ⁹ He had the first Christian churches built in the city of Dadu. ¹⁰ At his request, the pope permitted Mongolian as a liturgical language. ¹¹ The pope appointed John of Montecorvino as the Archbishop and Patriarch of the Orient. ¹² The Persian Il-Khanate was ruled by Ghazan. ¹³ The Armenian king Hethum requested his support in the war against the Mamluks. ¹⁴ Ghazan subsequently marched to Syria with his army. ¹⁵ In his undertaking he counted on the Christians to help him. ¹⁶ He asked the King of Cyprus and the leaders of the Christian orders for assistance. ¹⁷ At the battle near Damascus the Mamluks emerged victorious.

¹⁸ The Armenian king Hethum paid with his life for his attempt to enter into an alliance with the Catholic Church. ¹⁹ The Mongols, who had converted to Islam by now, killed him in Anazarba. ²⁰ The Armenians are certainly tried to the last in a world of power struggles between Rome, Byzantium and the Muslims. ²¹ Meanwhile in Asia Minor, Osman, a newly rising ruler, attracts attention. ²² He had liberated his people from the Rum-Seljuks and gained power over the Turkmen tribes. ²³ Further conquests greatly extended his realm. ²⁴ The crescent

moon became the symbol of his reign. ²⁵ He was succeeded by his son Orhan. ²⁶ Orhan made Bursa the capital of the empire.

²⁷ In Rome Pope Boniface proclaimed the Holy Year. ²⁸ It attracted an enormous amount of pilgrims to the city. ²⁹ After the loss of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, it seemed like Rome had become the centre of the Catholic world. ³⁰ With the growing number of pilgrims, Rome's income also increased. ³¹ The pope and the Frankish king Philip disagreed about taxing the clergy. ³² In his bull *Unam sanctam*, Pope Boniface emphasised papal supremacy over the monarchs. ³³ His successor, Pope Clement, relocated the papal seat and the Curia to the city of Avignon. ³⁴ Thus the pope was under the protection of the powerful Frankish Empire which, in turn, profited financially from the move. ³⁵ Under King Philip the Jews were dispossessed and exiled from the Frankish Empire. ³⁶ The order of the Templar Knights gradually became the only money administrators in Europe. ³⁷ The Templars had their main seat on the island of Cyprus; most of their treasure was kept in Paris and London. ³⁸ The order was extremely controversial. ³⁹ The Templars were accused of witchcraft, sodomy and heresy. ⁴⁰ At the Council of Vienne the pope dissolved the order. ⁴¹ The Order of Saint John came into their assets. ⁴² The coffers of the Frankish King also received considerable compensation for the trial costs. ⁴³ Thus money, gold and riches once more became a central issue for kings, cardinals and popes. ⁴⁴ After Pope Clement's death, the Italian cardinals and their successors demanded the relocation of the papal seat to Rome. ⁴⁵ The deceased King Philip's son of the same name forced the election of a Frenchman to the pope. ⁴⁶ To this end he lured those cardinals eligible to vote to Lyon where he had them locked up for forty days. ⁴⁷ Thus he got his way. ⁴⁸ The old cardinal Jacques Dueze was elected pope and adopted the name John. ⁴⁹ But he proved to be a strong-willed pontiff who did not respond to manipulation. ⁵⁰ He regarded his office as superior to that of a monarch and was not afraid to rebuke crowned heads of state. ⁵¹ John had a palatial residence built for him in Avignon. ⁵² He condemned the doctrine of poverty practised by a branch of the Franciscans as heresy.

⁵³ The Bavarian duke Louis had himself crowned as Roman Emperor. ⁵⁴ He did this without the pope's approval. ⁵⁵ The coronation was performed at St. Peter's Church in Rome by the leader of the pope's opponents. ⁵⁶ The dispute over the Frankish throne led to a war between Philip from the House of Valois and the English king Edward. ⁵⁷ Edward landed in Normandy with his troops. ⁵⁸ His archers beat the French knights and their allies at the Battle of Crecy. ⁵⁹ Just at that time a plague epidemic broke out. ⁶⁰ A third of Europe's population died. ⁶¹ The Jews were accused of having caused the plague. ⁶² They were also accused of

having poisoned the wells. ⁶³ In a bull the officiating pope declared the Jews to be innocent of causing the epidemic. ⁶⁴ But this did not soothe temperaments. ⁶⁵ Persecutions of the Jews were the order of the day. ⁶⁶ Numerous Jewish communities in Europe were annihilated. ⁶⁷ In Strasbourg hundreds of Jews were publicly burned at the stake. ⁶⁸ There is no end to the persecutions in sight. ⁶⁹ Nobody protects or speaks out for the Jews among all peoples and all religious communities. ⁷⁰ The LORD and Creator of the world remains their only hope and consolation. ⁷¹ Perhaps He will save them at some stage or He will reveal to them the purpose of their suffering which seems so pointless to them right now. ⁷² Only the LORD can save His People from the deadly embrace of its enemies.

Part FIVE

CHAPTER 7

1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

³ To understand why the persecution of the Jews in Europe is possible despite the imperial protection, one has to take a look at the past. ⁴ Already centuries ago the theologian Augustine of Hippo talked about an inferior position of Judaism to Christianity. ⁵ The lawyer and later third pope by the name of Innocent then transferred this idea to a political-legal level. ⁶ In a letter he stated that God had condemned the Jews to eternal slavery because they were guilty of having caused Jesus' death.

⁷ After innocent Jews had been executed in Fulda for an alleged ritual murder, Emperor Frederick introduced the legal status of the so-called *servi camerae regis*. ⁸ This made them direct subjects of the emperor and therefore granted them his special protection. ⁹ However, this was not as altruistic as it appears. ¹⁰ The Jews provided an important source of income for the Crown as they had to pay a special tax for their protection. ¹¹ The trade with this imperial protection tax, however, jeopardised the Jews' legal security. ¹² In exchange for protection against payment it was the sovereigns' right to arbitrarily treat the Jews like serfs. ¹³ This was particularly pronounced during the reign of King Rudolf of Habsburg. ¹⁴ He prohibited the Jews from emigrating to Eretz Israel and had their possessions confiscated. ¹⁵ Under Rudolf's successor the situation became even worse.

¹⁶ The Roman Emperor Louis introduced a veritable capitation tax for the Jews. ¹⁷ The Church had excommunicated him; furthermore his policy of expansionism increasingly got him into conflict with the nobles of the empire. ¹⁸ Therefore the nobles eligible to elect the King of Rome quickly agreed on a suitable candidate

who would later on also be permitted to assert his claim to be crowned as emperor. 19 Thus the electors voted for Charles of Bohemia, a descendant of the earlier emperors, as King of Rome. 20 Motivated by lack of funds, Charles also frequently pledged the royal protection tax of the Jews which led to the disappearance of numerous Jewish quarters. 21 Pope Clement, Charles' former tutor at the Frankish court, proclaimed the Holy Year after the plague epidemic and ruled its celebration every fifty years. 22 He condemned the lay movement of the flagellants and their public practice of self-flagellation as heresy. 23 In Rome a cardinal, commissioned by the new Pope Innocent, crowned Charles of Bohemia as emperor. 24 Charles subsequently issued the constitution for the *Sacrum Imperium Romanum*, the new official title for the Roman Empire. 25 Amongst other things, this constitution regulated the future election of the King of Rome by the electors. 26 The number of electors was determined as seven; their majority vote now decided the election and no longer the pope's consent. 27 However, the pope retained the honorary task of conducting the coronation. 28 The imperial code of law also stipulated the electors' rights and duties including the protection of the Jews. 29 Bohemia became the emperor's centre of power. 30 He supported the extensive development of Prague as the capital. 31 He also annexed Silesia to the Kingdom of Bohemia and extended his reign to include Lower Lusatia and the Margraviate of Brandenburg. 32 He was anxious to act in concert with the pope. 33 His endeavours in this respect were not always successful, however. 34 Pope Gregory still resided in Avignon. 35 This led to disputes over the papal holdings in Italy.

36 The mystic Catherine of Siena attempted to persuade the pope to relocate back to Rome. 37 She had already tried to persuade Pope Clement before this. 38 She eventually convinced the pope and he moved back to Rome. 39 He unsuccessfully tried to mediate in the war between England and France. 40 Pope Gregory condemned the teachings of the English theologian John Wycliffe. 41 Wycliffe criticised the wealth as well as some official views of the Church. 42 Consequently the English king Richard had to suppress a people's uprising demanding class equality according to Wycliffe's teachings. 43 The existing discontent led to civil wars in England as well as in France. 44 The centuries old hostilities between the two countries still also exist. 45 After Gregory's death, disputes between the cardinals led to the election of two popes; one resided in Rome, the other in Avignon. 46 In Poland the Lithuanian grand duke Jogaila was crowned king; he married the Polish queen Jadwiga. 47 Jogaila, Jagiełło in Polish, was baptised Władysław in Cracow. 48 The Christianisation of Lithuania began under his influence. 49 The Ottomans' advance into Europe was favoured by several factors. 50 Osman's son Orhan married the daughter of the Byzantine emperor John Kantakouzenos. 51 As several Ottoman soldiers served in the Byzantine army, the

emperor relinquished a small fortress near the city of Callipolis to them. ⁵² Its Greek population abandoned the city after an earthquake. ⁵³ The Ottomans now settled families from Anatolia there and viewed the takeover of the city as a gift from God. ⁵⁴ The citizens of Constantinople panicked; Kantakouzenos was dethroned. ⁵⁵ Orhan's son Murad conquered the Byzantine city of Adrianople. ⁵⁶ He renamed the city Edirne and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire. ⁵⁷ The Serbian duke Lazar commanded a Christian alliance against the Ottomans. ⁵⁸ The alliance consisted of Serbs, Albanians, Croats, Bulgarians and Vlachs. ⁵⁹ They fought the Ottomans in the Battle of Kosovo. ⁶⁰ Both armies' leaders were killed in the action. ⁶¹ The weakened Byzantium appealed to Rome for help against the Muslim invasion.

⁶² The power balance also changed in East Asia. ⁶³ Chinese rebels ended the Mongolian dominion of China. ⁶⁴ Hongwu, its new emperor, named his realm Ta Ming and made Nanking its capital. ⁶⁵ He was a follower of Confucianism and thereby weakened the Christian mission in East Asia. ⁶⁶ The military leader Temür ibn Taraghai Barlas endeavoured to revive the Mongols' former glory. ⁶⁷ He proclaimed himself as Genghis Khan's descendant; in Europe he was called Tamerlane or Timur. ⁶⁸ Timur was viewed as a cruel conqueror who devastated entire regions. ⁶⁹ Under his reign large parts of Central Asia converted to Islam; the new capital Samarkand as well as the city of Bukhara were magnificently embellished. ⁷⁰ He started his conquests in Khorasan, subdued large parts of Persia and Mesopotamia and advanced as far as the Volga. ⁷¹ Tamerlane exploited the civil war in the Delhi Sultanate to conquer it. ⁷² Then he focussed his attention on Syria and the Ottoman Empire.

Part SIX

CHAPTER 1

¹ *Let my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right.*

² Murad's son Bayezid rules over the Ottoman Empire. ³ He is married to the daughter of the Byzantine emperor John Palaiologos. ⁴ Immediately after his accession to the throne he had his brother Yakub assassinated. ⁵ Bayezid conquered Bulgaria and made Walachia a vassal state of the Ottomans. ⁶ He also gained control over Macedonia, parts of Serbia and Greece. ⁷ Byzantium has by now shrunk to the city of Constantinople and surroundings. ⁸ The Hungarian king Sigismund, son of Emperor Charles, went to war against the Ottomans to prevent their advance into Europe. ⁹ At the Battle of Nicopolis Sigismund's army was defeated. ¹⁰ In Anatolia a power struggle developed between the Mongol leader Timur and Sultan Bayezid.

11 Timur had previously already conquered Baghdad, Damascus and Aleppo. 12 The Mongols and Ottomans battled against each other at Ankara. 13 The Anatolian nobles, who had recently subdued Bayezid, sided with Timur. 14 The sultan's Tartar soldiers also defected to the Mongols. 15 The Ottomans were badly defeated; Sultan Bayezid died in Timur's captivity. 16 Encouraged by his victory, Timur also wanted to conquer the empire of Cathay, but died during the expedition and was buried at Samarkand. 17 Meanwhile the Ottomans had recovered from their defeat by the Mongols and attacked the city of Thessaloniki.

18 The Catholic Church in the west increasingly loses its standing. 19 The unsustainable situation of having two simultaneously officiating popes was meant to be remedied at the Council of Pisa; instead three popes emerged after the synod. 20 Gregory resided in Rome, Benedict in Avignon and Alexander in Bologna. 21 The Catholics' faith was thus severely tested. 22 After Pope Alexander's death his followers elected a successor. 23 They chose Baldassare Cossa who still had to be ordained as a priest and bishop. 24 As pope he adopted the name of John. 25 That same year the Hungarian king Sigismund was chosen as King of Rome by three electors. 26 He had long been aspiring to the title, ever since the electors had dethroned his half-brother, the Bohemian king Wenceslaus. 27 Now Sigismund wanted to end the three-pope-era. 28 Just like Emperor Constantine in the past, he also strived to restore order to Church matters inside his realm because he wanted the emperor's crown.

29 At that point somebody else was also concerned about the Catholic Church's reputation, in an entirely different way, however. 30 This was Jan Hus, priest, preacher and master at the University of Prague. 31 Amongst other offices he was also the personal confessor of the Bohemian queen Sophia of Bavaria who avidly attended his sermons. 32 He advocated introducing the national language into the liturgy. 33 Hus demanded a strictly virtuous conduct and denounced excesses, immorality and a life adapted to the prevailing spirit of the age. 34 According to his view, the Bible and not the pope was the decisive authority on moral issues. 35 Hus criticised Pope John's bull of indulgences. 36 He declared Jesus' Sermon of the Mount as the definitive guideline for Christians and the Church. 37 He also demanded the communion of the Body of Christ as well as the Blood of Christ for the common people. 38 Based on his radical views, the Archbishop of Prague prohibited him from preaching and celebrating Holy Mass. 39 Hus, however, defied him and undeterred continued to strive for a simple, poor and moral Church. 40 For that reason the archbishop consulted Pope John who had Hus excommunicated. 41 When Hus was subsequently banned from Prague, riots

erupted. ⁴² Hus retired to the country where he composed some writings and dedicated himself to contributing to the translation of the Bible. ⁴³ Through his writings he provoked the clergy even more while he became ever more popular amongst the population. ⁴⁴ Because of the Church's unsustainable situation the Roman king Sigismund convened the Council of Constance. ⁴⁵ As the defender of the Roman Church he endeavoured to reinstate one legitimate pope. ⁴⁶ Pope John opened the council which was exclusively attended by the cardinals sympathising with him. ⁴⁷ Shortly before the start of the council Jan Hus also came to Constance to defend his teachings there.

⁴⁸ He had been invited by King Sigismund who assured him of safe conduct for his journey there and back. ⁴⁹ In Constance Hus' excommunication was revoked, yet he was still arrested soon after. ⁵⁰ On Sigismund's arrival in the city, he did not attempt to get Hus released, but summoned him to make his peace with the Church first. ⁵¹ The king defined a new voting system for the council. ⁵² Pope John signed his letter of resignation under the condition that the other two popes followed suit. ⁵³ Despite his pledge to remain in Constance, John fled from the city disguised as a farm labourer. ⁵⁴ Thus the council no longer had a quorum. ⁵⁵ In order to evade the problem, the council passed a decree according to which its mandate came directly from Christ. ⁵⁶ John was arrested during his flight and deposed as pope. ⁵⁷ He eventually found himself in the same prison as Jan Hus.

⁵⁸ Now Pope Gregory, who resided in Rome, also declared his willingness to abdicate under the condition that a new council was convened. ⁵⁹ A new Council of Constance was therefore formally summoned which was also attended by several bishops loyal to Gregory. ⁶⁰ Gregory abdicated. ⁶¹ The council requested Jan Hus to rescind his views; Hus, however, refused for reasons of conscience. ⁶² He was not prepared to accept the council's doctrinal authority as he did not find the Council Fathers' assertions consistent with the Bible. ⁶³ Subsequently he was condemned as an arch-heretic, burned at the stake and his ashes scattered into the Rhine.

⁶⁴ Benedict, who resided in Avignon, refused to voluntarily abdicate and fled to Spain. ⁶⁵ As quite a number of his bishops had travelled to Avignon, the council officially declared him removed from office; Benedict, however, ignored their ruling. ⁶⁶ It took another two years before the cardinals agreed on a suitable candidate for the papal throne. ⁶⁷ Thus Cardinal Oddo di Colonna was elected as the new pope of the Catholic Church and adopted the name Martin in honour of the Saint of that feast day. ⁶⁸ An uprising occurred in Bohemia after Jerome of Prague suffered the same fate as his teacher Jan Hus. ⁶⁹ Hus' followers were still

able to claim one small victory when it was decided at the Council of Basel that laymen could also partake in the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ in Bohemia and Moravia. ⁷⁰ Another resolution ruled separate districts for Jews and Christians which led to the establishment of Jewish quarters. ⁷¹ The war between England and France was also discussed at the Council of Basil and peaceful solutions explored. ⁷² A peasant's daughter by the name of Jeanne d'Arc came to prominence during this war, but was later sacrificed at the stake for political reasons.

Part SIX

CHAPTER 2

¹ Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak so defiantly. ² No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt themselves. ³ It is God who judges: He brings one down, He exalts another.

⁴ Pope Eugene moved the Council of Basel to Ferrara where it was endeavoured to reach a Church union with the Byzantine patriarch Joseph. ⁵ A threatening plague epidemic eventually saw the council transfer to Florence. ⁶ Here the delegates of the Byzantine emperor John, who was hoping for military support against the Ottomans, agreed to most of Rome's demands. ⁷ One of these was the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church and the pope. ⁸ But not everybody agreed to the Church union under Latin rule. ⁹ The archbishop of Ephesus declined to sign the Council's decree. ¹⁰ At the Synod of Jerusalem the oriental patriarchs excommunicated the united Greeks. ¹¹ The Muscovite grand duke Vasily deposed Isidore, the Greek metropolit, as he had agreed to the Church union. ¹² The Russian bishops summoned a synod and elected their own metropolitan. ¹³ Thus the Russian Orthodox Church made itself autonomous. ¹⁴ The Syrian Orthodox Church suffered greatly under Mongolian rule, but refused to be defeated. ¹⁵ It still fed on the legacy of Gregory bar Hebraeus, a scholar of Jewish ancestry, who had bequeathed his valuable theological, historical and scientific writings two centuries earlier. ¹⁶ The Orthodox Church in Georgia also fought for its survival.

¹⁷ The Orthodox Churches of Bulgaria and Serbia were under Ottoman rule and limited in their ecclesiastical activities. ¹⁸ The Ottoman sultan Mehmed prepared to conquer the capital of the East Roman Empire. ¹⁹ Constantinople had already been threatened several times, but had been able to defy its enemies with its city walls and the defensive barrier surrounding its port. ²⁰ This time, however, Emperor Constantine was facing a mighty force. ²¹ He appealed to Pope Nicolas and the western rulers for help. ²² Only the pope promised to come to his aid; yet this was contingent on a condition: the enforcement of the Church union;

Constantine agreed, but it was too late. ²³ Constantinople was captured. ²⁴ The military elite corps of the Janissaries significantly contributed to the Ottomans' victory. ²⁵ It consisted of abducted Christian boys who had been Islamised, radicalised and trained in brutal combat. ²⁶ Most of these were youths from Bosnia. ²⁷ Parts of the conquered territories converted to Islam; the majority, however, generally remained Christian. ²⁸ The Ottomans' methods did not exactly motivate the population to convert. ²⁹ Thus the history of Christianity now also repeated itself in the Islamic world as all the good and noble intentions of the proclamation of the faith ultimately failed through the rulers' abuse of power and thirst for glory. ³⁰ The conquered city of Constantinople, which had been renamed Kostantiniyye, became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. ³¹ Mehmed claimed the authority of the Roman Emperor for himself. ³² The church of Hagia Sophia became the mosque Ayasofya. ³³ The Orthodox Christian patriarchy in Kostantiniyye was preserved. ³⁴ Mehmed now turned against Hungary to clear his way into Western Europe. ³⁵ This entailed conquering Belgrade Fortress which was situated at an important military road. ³⁶ At that time Hungary was ruled by General John Hunyadi who acted on behalf of the under-age king Ladislaus. ³⁷ Hunyadi had the Belgrade Fortress reinforced and armed. ³⁸ Fuelled by the passionate sermons of the Franciscan John of Capistrano numerous peasants also joined Hunyadi's army. ³⁹ This enabled the Hungarians to defeat the Ottoman army despite its superior numbers. ⁴⁰ Hunyadi died soon after of the plague.

⁴¹ Before the Siege of Belgrade Pope Callixtus had issued a papal bull which ordered the bells to be rung at noon. ⁴² At the chiming of the bells the Christians were meant to pray for their victory over the Ottomans. ⁴³ Although this command was only received after the victory in some regions, the custom was maintained and the bells rung daily at noon to celebrate and show gratitude for the event. ⁴⁴ The scholar Enea Silvio Piccolomini was elected as the new pope. ⁴⁵ He adopted the name Pius. ⁴⁶ Even before he became pope he wrote about a certain Johannes Gensfleisch, called Gutenberg, who had produced several Bibles using movable metal letters in Mainz.

⁴⁷ The same year which saw the fall of Constantinople also ended the war between England and France after more than a hundred years. ⁴⁸ Afterwards the houses of York and Lancaster engaged in a war over the throne until Henry from the House of Tudor was finally crowned as the English king. ⁴⁹ Meanwhile Mehmed and the Ottomans had conquered the Peloponnese, the rest of Siberia, Albania and the Crimean Khanate. ⁵⁰ Following the prolonged war over the Greek and Adriatic islands, the Republic of Venice made its peace with the Ottomans, but did, however, have to surrender some territories and make tribute payments. ⁵¹ The

strategically important island of Rhodes, with the Knights Templar's headquarters, defied the Ottoman siege. ⁵² The Ottoman fleet conquered the Italian city of Otranto; the resident Christians, who refused to convert to Islam, were beheaded.

⁵³ At this stage several popes have ruled in Rome. ⁵⁴ Currently Pope Sixtus, a nepotist with a passion for grandeur, is in office. ⁵⁵ He has declared the Council of Constance's decrees about the council's supremacy over the pope invalid. ⁵⁶ His critics accuse him of keeping catamites. ⁵⁷ Some claim this is the reason for appointing numerous nephews of his as cardinals or elevating them to the nobility. ⁵⁸ He also revived the Inquisition in Spain. ⁵⁹ The Inquisition's main victims were Jews who had converted to Christianity – called Marrano and Converso – but still practised their Jewish faith. ⁶⁰ But Moors who had converted to Christianity, the Moriscos, were not spared either. ⁶¹ When Granada in Spain, the last stronghold of the Muslim Empire, was subdued, Muslims as well as Jews were ousted.

⁶² In the east the Tatars' power kept waning while Russia's strength increased. ⁶³ The Muscovite grand duke Ivan, married to the niece of the last Byzantine Emperor, viewed himself as the "guardian of the Byzantine throne" and took the title of Tsar, derived from the Latin word Caesar. ⁶⁴ He had the derelict Moscow fortress of the Kremlin converted as his private residence. ⁶⁵ Portugal and Spain tried to open up a sea route to India. ⁶⁶ Spain commissioned the Italian seafarer Christopher Columbus with the task who tried to reach India via the western route. ⁶⁷ There he was supposed to contact the Great Khan before returning home with coveted treasures. ⁶⁸ The profits from the sale of the goods were to be put towards Jerusalem's liberation from Muslim rule. ⁶⁹ When Columbus reached dry land, he assumed this to be India; he called the indigenous population Indians and was surprised that there were no aromatic plants to be found. ⁷⁰ The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama tried sailing to India by navigating around Africa and, in fact, succeeded. ⁷¹ Around the same time Martin Behaim created his terrestrial globe showing the three known continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. ⁷² When the Italian seafarer Amerigo Vespucci later on anchored south of Columbus' landing place, he strongly suspected that Columbus had discovered a new continent.

Part SIX

CHAPTER 3

¹ *May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you.*

² The urge to explore and missionise, gold fever, the thirst for power and megalomania. ³ All these will come to characterise this era. ⁴ As more new parts of the world are discovered, the larger it becomes in people's eyes and human

greed grows correspondingly. ⁵ Instead of praising God, instead of thanking him, people become intoxicated with material and spiritual goods, with power, and indulge themselves in dogmatism and arrogance. ⁶ Presently all this primarily applies to Christianity and Islam or their leaders respectively. ⁷ The Jews are still the scapegoats for everything and anything. ⁸ On the island of Rhodes they were forced to convert to the Christian faith. ⁹ Those who refused were either killed, burned at the stake or sold into slavery. ¹⁰ In Brandenburg in Germania thirty eight Jews were wrongly accused of host desecration and burned. ¹¹ A Jewish quarter called ghetto was established in Venice. ¹² All Jews resident in territories under the pope's influence have to wear a yellow hat to ease identification. ¹³ Jewish houses are scoured for copies of the Talmud by the Roman Inquisition. ¹⁴ Catholics in possession of a Talmud are excommunicated. ¹⁵ Jews are banished from several cities including Naples and Prague.

¹⁶ Mainly under the command of Sultan Selim, the Ottomans conquered the Arabian Peninsula with Mecca and Medina as well as Syria and Egypt. ¹⁷ When the Mamluks took over the rule of Jerusalem, Selim issued a decree which guaranteed religious freedom to the resident Christians and Jews. ¹⁸ Selim was a deeply pious Sunni and persecuted the Shiites and Alevis in his realm. ¹⁹ He adopted the title of caliph from the last caliph of the Abbasid Dynasty. ²⁰ Selim was a rigorous, some claim brutal, close to ascetic and poetically gifted man; a tireless defender of God's law and the Ottoman Empire. ²¹ His son and successor Suleiman inherited a consolidated realm and dedicated himself to spreading Islam in the northwest.

²² In the Christian West, particularly in Rome, one is presently occupied with different matters. ²³ If promoting art, science, and sports can be termed "culture" then the current popes are the occident's cultural rather than religious leaders. ²⁴ They support any kind of the arts, even sciences, regardless of financing problems and the difficulties of reconciling many a detail with the Bible. ²⁵ The depiction of God in the Sistine Chapel in Rome serves as the best example of the defiance of biblical commandments. ²⁶ Naturally the Church leaders are counting on revenue and treasure from the newly discovered world overseas and, in order to bridge the lean period until those arrive, they have intensified they already notorious sale of indulgences. ²⁷ This angers the numerous critics of clerical excesses even more. ²⁸ One of them, the Augustine monk Martin Luther, caused great excitement. ²⁹ His censure of unethical practices by the Church leaders and the clergy led to a schism. ³⁰ Some viewed this as a negative development; others regarded it as an opportunity to re-evaluate one's own piety and way of life. ³¹ Luther's work culminated in his translation of the Bible whereby he made God's

word accessible to the common people. ³² There were, however, also some stains on his reputation; his hate filled pamphlet against the Jews was one example.

³³ Besides Luther other reformers also caused schisms; the most important among them were Calvin and Zwingli. ³⁴ The English king Henry also divided the Church, for entirely different reasons, however. ³⁵ He caused the rift of the Anglican from the Roman Catholic Church to facilitate the annulment of his marriage. ³⁶ As Rome did not oblige him, he received his desired decision from the Anglican dignitaries. ³⁷ He wed six women in all of whom two were executed and his marriage to another two were annulled. ³⁸ It also needs to be mentioned that there were a number of reformers inside the Church as well who tried to renew it without dividing it. ³⁹ Erasmus and Ignatius are well known, but the less famous Jewish nun Teresa of Avila also deserves to be mentioned.

⁴⁰ Much also happens in the Slavic territories. ⁴¹ At a meeting at the castle of Radom, King Alexander established the Sejm, a two-chamber parliament; the Nihil Novi constitution became the basis for the Polish Aristocratic Republic. ⁴² The Grand Princes of Moscow have been fighting the Tatars and the rebellious Khanate of Kazan for decades. ⁴³ The Muscovite Grand Prince Ivan, who had come to power at the age of thirteen, had himself crowned at sixteen years of age as the Russian Tsar by the patriarch. ⁴⁴ After centuries of being in union with Hungary the Croats transferred their allegiance and recognised Ferdinand of Habsburg as their king in the hope of better support in the battle against the advancing Ottomans. ⁴⁵ Serbia is already ruled by the Ottomans, Hungary was also defeated and Bosnia had been conquered a long time ago; parts of Croatia are variously under home rule or that of the Ottomans. ⁴⁶ The situation in far away Spain and Portugal is very different. ⁴⁷ Both countries' thirst for discovering and conquering more territories knows no bounds; their monarchs have divided the world map between them and established their respective spheres of interest. ⁴⁸ The newly claimed lands, particularly those overseas called America, were often cruelly seized, colonised, exploited and missionised. ⁴⁹ The indigenous Inca and Aztec peoples were defeated by Francisco Pizarro and Hernán Cortés. ⁵⁰ Various parts of Europe impatiently wait for the arrival of gold and other treasures from the conquered territories to finance culture, desires and wars. ⁵¹ The Ottoman army reached Vienna. ⁵² Sultan Suleiman had the population informed that nobody would be harmed if they converted to Islam and opened the city gates. ⁵³ However, as some of his troops committed unspeakable atrocities in Vienna's surroundings, ransacked and looted, the Viennese were not willing to adopt the Islamic faith "Ottoman style". ⁵⁴ They successfully defended their city despite the Ottomans digging tunnels and blowing up the city walls. ⁵⁵ Although ground-

breaking events are currently taking place in all parts of the world, we wish to acquaint the reader with two initially trivial seeming incidents. ⁵⁶ Like out of nowhere a Jew by the name of David Reubeni appeared in front of Pope Clement in Rome, claiming to be an envoy of the northern tribes of Israel from the Chai Bar Desert who were apparently prepared to fight the Ottomans alongside the Christians. ⁵⁷ As Rome perceived the Ottomans as a major threat, it was not perturbed by Reubeni's Jewish roots, but handed him a letter of recommendation to the King of Portugal and the Emperor of Ethiopia in the hope that another military campaign would ensue. ⁵⁸ At the Portuguese court Reubeni was received with honours; he promised the local Jews their return to Israel, but his mission was still not met with success. ⁵⁹ This was because an official living at the royal court, a Jew who had converted to Christianity and reverted back to Judaism after rapturously listening to Reubeni, had circumcised himself and changed his name to Solomon Molcho. ⁶⁰ This proved to be too much even for the slightly more tolerant conditions in Portugal and thus Reubeni and Molcho left the country without having achieved their goals. ⁶¹ By a quirk of fate Solomon Molcho, who claimed to be the Messiah, met Pope Clement and gained his favour. ⁶² Unfortunately this did not impress the Inquisition who accused him of Judaizing and sentenced him to be burned at the stake. ⁶³ With the pope's help, however, he could leave Rome without being recognised while another man was burned in his place.

⁶⁴ The second event occurred at the other end of the world, in the Aztec territories conquered by Spain. ⁶⁵ As the Aztecs practiced a primitive nature worship which demanded cruel human sacrifices to appease their idols, while the Spaniards employed no less barbaric methods in their conquest, the Christian missionaries' proclamations did not exactly fall on fertile ground. ⁶⁶ Quite the opposite, in fact; a deep hostility existed between the indigenous population and the European invaders and only a small number adopted the Christian faith. ⁶⁷ One day, however, one of the few Christian Aztecs claimed to have witnessed a divine vision. ⁶⁸ Following prolonged debates he finally convinced the bishop and even some of the indigenous population of his vision's truth. ⁶⁹ The apparition of a celestial woman, as the seer described it, left an image on his cloak, so strange and simultaneously miraculous that generations to come would be intrigued by it. ⁷⁰ But it was only after this miracle that the actual miracle occurred which makes us recount this tale. ⁷¹ After neither the soldiers nor the missionaries had succeeded to convert the Aztecs to Christianity, this now happened spontaneously and on a massive scale, which is the reason we are telling this story. ⁷² The hostility against the Spaniards vanished overnight; numerous Aztecs got baptised; mixed marriages took place and two alien natures became one – a definite miracle.

Part SIX

CHAPTER 4

1 It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. 2 The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. 3 Your hands made me and formed me. 4 Give me understanding to learn your commands.

5 The outstanding personality of the era is without doubt the Ottoman sultan Suleiman. 6 Under his reign the Ottoman Empire saw its largest expansion so far. 7 His territories span three continents; its size is close to the former Roman Empire. 8 Suleiman rose to fame as a skilled strategist, pious Muslim and talented poet, but also as a cruel tyrant. 9 He unites all the characteristics which “distinguished” the famous historical figures. 10 Historical figures in various positions of power, that is. 11 The methods of exercising power, particularly the abuse of same, are similar in all religions and cultures. 12 Just like the popes, Suleiman also promoted the arts, especially the building of palaces and ostentatious places of worship. 13 He was also concerned with the unity of the faith. 14 And he, too, established standards and guidelines to differentiate between the “correct” and the “damnable” faith. 15 Suleiman exclusively permitted the Sunni interpretation of the venerable Koran. 16 Adherents of other religions were led to the right faith through the power of persuasion or, if necessary, by force. 17 The custom of abducting young boys from non-Muslim regions of the realm was also continued under his reign. 18 In the beginnings of Islam entire ethnic groups converted to the new religion virtually overnight. 19 Frequently without any use of force even in the traditionally Christian territories of North Africa. 20 The same occurred in the north and east of Asia where some tribes adopted the Islamic faith on receiving nothing more than a written invitation. 21 The conquered peoples of Europe, however, desperately fight their Islamisation. 22 They realise that the Ottomans’ main objective is not the dissemination of the faith in the one God, but the expansion of their power. 23 In the past they have already undergone the same experience with the Christian conquerors. 24 Thus the Christian as well as the Muslim rulers have discredited the belief in the One True God. 25 As a consequence the population identifies religion and the service to God with slavery, compulsory labour and military service and oppression. 26 Subsequently the Muslims’ dominance compromised the faith anew. 27 Sultan Suleiman wanted to test the effectiveness of his powers. 28 He wanted to prove that he could take the city of Vienna. 29 But an insignificant town, a small fortress in southern Hungary, halted the progress of his ninety thousand strong army and put an end to his ambitions. 30 This was the fortress of Szigetvár and its two thousand five hundred Croatian defenders under the command of Nikola Šubić. 31 Although the

stronghold was destroyed and the Croats killed, the siege stalled the Ottomans' progress long enough and stressed them to such an extent that they were too weak to continue their advance on Vienna. ³² Sultan Suleiman died two days before Szigetvár was conquered. ³³ His death was kept secret to prevent the army from disbanding before his successor could be appointed. ³⁴ Thus Suleiman's grandeur and power met with an abrupt end in a central European swamp. ³⁵ Another powerful man of the era was the Russian tsar Ivan. ³⁶ He, too, was a skilled military strategist and diplomat, pious and strict, but also cruel according to some accounts. ³⁷ He attempted to be recognised as the Byzantine Emperor, at least in matters of the faith. ³⁸ Ivan also had palaces, churches and monasteries built and tried to raise Moscow to the rank of Constantinople. ³⁹ But all that was not enough for him. ⁴⁰ As Jerusalem was under Muslim rule, he wanted to make Moscow the new Jerusalem, for the Orthodox Christians at least. ⁴¹ He issued reforms which made life easier for the common people and curtailed the power of the boyars who had treated him cruelly as an orphaned child. ⁴² Whenever he felt deceived, however, was opposed or thought himself betrayed, he knew no mercy. ⁴³ He considered himself to be just, which he in fact was in many matters, but his violent temper coupled with the traumas he had experienced frequently led to his downfall. ⁴⁴ As such he murdered his own son in a fit of rage. ⁴⁵ He deeply regretted the deed until the end of his days.

⁴⁶ Let us now take a look at what else is new in the world. ⁴⁷ The Jews, although this is nothing new, are still being persecuted nearly everywhere. ⁴⁸ Pope Paul either had them cooped up in segregated areas or banished them; they were permitted to work as ragmen. ⁴⁹ When parts of Poland were conquered by the Russians, the resident Jews had to adopt the Orthodox faith. ⁵⁰ Those who refused were drowned. ⁵¹ Pope Gregory prohibited Jewish physicians from treating Christian patients.

⁵² The Inquisition published lists of outlawed Jewish writings. ⁵³ A wave of persecutions took place in Spain because several Jews from Amsterdam had aided the rebels in their fight against the Spaniards. ⁵⁴ Subsequently numerous Jews left Spain and Portugal and relocated to Amsterdam. ⁵⁵ More or less the only ruler who supported the Jews, at least some of them, was Sultan Suleiman. ⁵⁶ He forced the pope to release certain Jewish people. ⁵⁷ Then he appointed them to important posts in his realm. ⁵⁸ Their services were particularly sought after in diplomacy, book printing, finance and administration. ⁵⁹ Another ruler who behaved mercifully towards the Jews must also be mentioned here. ⁶⁰ In the city of Metz King Henry allowed the Jews to freely practise their religion. ⁶¹ The Jews quickly embraced their luck and Metz became an important centre of Judaism.

62 But there is also other news. 63 The Portuguese and the Spaniards compete to explore and conquer the New World. 64 Neither their treatment of the indigenous population or that of each other is characterised by sensitivity. 65 Their deeds are, however, extensively described in numerous chronicles so that we need not address this any further. 66 Various popes attempt to mend the many rifts inside the western Christendom caused by the schisms over the past decades. 67 Even after the conclusion of the twice interrupted Council of Trent they did not succeed. 68 Thus the Christian garden was enriched by several blossoms: Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Zwinglians, Anglicans, Mennonites, Hutterites and many more. 69 This development should really lead to humble contemplation, amongst the dignitaries as well as the believers. 70 But diabolical pride and the conviction that one is the only one in possession of the blessed truth stand in the way. 71 Thus the fragrant garden has turned into a bloody battlefield. 72 And all those involved justify their deeds by citing them as God's will – a scandalous state of affairs!

Part SIX

CHAPTER 5

1 This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers who approve their sayings. 2 They are like sheep and are destined to die; death will be their shepherd. 3 Their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions.

4 Rudolf of Habsburg, emperor of the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation” relocated from Vienna to Prague under threat of Ottoman attacks. 5 There he occupied himself with the arts, alchemy and astronomy. 6 Scholars from all over the world resided at his court. 7 He had already established the institution of the “Court Jews” while he was still in Vienna. 8 As the name implies they lived at the court, did not need to wear a symbol marking them as Jews or pay taxes. 9 Some were even elevated to the peerage.

10 What led to the privileges of the Court Jews? 11 In order to explain this we have to reach far back. 12 Just as several popes had kept concubines and several Spanish caliphs had kept catamites in the past, it was now the common practice of high nobles, kings and emperors to keep Court Jews. 13 Unlike the concubines and catamites, however, they did not present a cost factor as their services were profitably utilised. 14 Thanks to their study of the Torah and the Talmud the Jews had always possessed a trained and astute intellect. 15 Their repeated persecutions, banishments and expropriations had taught them to invest their assets in money and gold in order to be constantly mobile and ready to escape. 16 Of necessity they

therefore became accomplished at making the best of things and turned into financial wizards. ¹⁷ Once those Jewish qualities were recognised many an emperor, king or noble wanted to profit by them and acquire riches with the Jews' help. ¹⁸ Money is predominantly needed to finance the many wars which are currently raging right across the European continent. ¹⁹ And thus an increasing number of rulers take successful Jews into their courts, grant them special privileges and have them work for them, i.e. make money for them. ²⁰ Although skilled Jews are now sought after, they are certainly not loved. ²¹ They are solely used for one's own advantage and rewarded according to the profits they make. ²² The simple believers or common Jews, as they are generally referred to, are still being tormented in any way imaginable. ²³ Thus distrust, envy and discord spread amongst the Jews themselves. ²⁴ But there are also exceptions. ²⁵ Several Court Jews, even after having risen at court and become rich, don't forget their brothers in faith, but actively support them. ²⁶ One of them was the deceased Jacob Bassevi whose aid even reached the Jews in Eretz Israel.

²⁷ As already mentioned, the whole of Europe is at war. ²⁸ Superficially this is all about religion, but the hidden agenda is to amass yet more power and wealth. ²⁹ Two outstanding personalities of the present era must not remain unmentioned. ³⁰ One is the Bohemian Albrecht Václav Eusebius z Valdštejna, also called Wallenstein. ³¹ The other is the English Calvinist Oliver Cromwell. ³² Both of them have significantly shaped political and military events. ³³ Wallenstein has been dead for quite some time; Cromwell is still ruling and fighting. ³⁴ After his parents' death, Wallenstein was put into a Jesuit seminary. ³⁵ The former member of a Protestant community now converted to Catholicism. ³⁶ Emperor Rudolf took him into his army who was fighting the Ottomans. ³⁷ After several military campaigns, Wallenstein was promoted to the rank of captain. ³⁸ His marriage to Lucretia of Víckov gained him further status and also a certain amount of wealth. ³⁹ He was now in a position to recruit his own mercenaries and put them at the emperor's disposal.

⁴⁰ When confrontations developed between the Protestant classes and the royal governors, the last mentioned were thrown out of the castle window. ⁴¹ Ferdinand of Habsburg, the new emperor, allied himself with the *Catholic league* and defeated the rebellious Protestants in Prague. ⁴² The Protestant confession being prohibited in Bohemia resulted in the emigration of numerous Protestants. ⁴³ Entrusted with the re-Catholicisation of the country were the Jesuits who had previously been ousted by the Protestant classes in Bohemia. ⁴⁴ The suppression of the uprising of the Bohemian estates, however, led to further religious wars in the Roman Empire. ⁴⁵ Wallenstein fought on the emperor's side. ⁴⁶ As the emperor

was in financial difficulties, several northern Bohemian territories were leased by him to Wallenstein and sold later on. ⁴⁷ Wallenstein subsequently founded the “Duchy of Friedland” which was independent from the Kingdom of Bohemia and exempt from royal taxation. ⁴⁸ Ferdinand appointed Wallenstein as the imperial commander-in-chief and expected him to quickly defeat the *Protestant Union*. ⁴⁹ The Protestant Imperial States therefore entered into an alliance with the Danes, the English and the Dutch. ⁵⁰ This alliance was intended to weaken the power of the Habsburgs and the Catholics inside the Imperium Romanum. ⁵¹ Wallenstein successfully ousted the Danes. ⁵² He even persuaded them to form an alliance with the emperor. ⁵³ The nobles, however, found Wallenstein had become too powerful and therefore forced the emperor to dismiss him. ⁵⁴ Yet he was very soon reinstated when the Catholics felt themselves threatened by the Swedes who had conquered North Germany and advanced as far as Bavaria. ⁵⁵ Once again it was up to Wallenstein to save the day. ⁵⁶ But this time the result was not decisive. ⁵⁷ The Swedish king died and Wallenstein left the battlefield. ⁵⁸ After refusing to besiege Regensburg in the middle of winter, he was accused of high treason and murdered. ⁵⁹ The emperor’s son of the same name, Archduke Ferdinand, now commanded the imperial army. ⁶⁰ After his succession to the throne, he implemented Wallenstein’s plans. ⁶¹ He made peace with France and Sweden.

⁶² This changed the face of Europe; country borders shifted and nations enjoyed more autonomy. ⁶³ The emperor’s power was being restricted to his hereditary territories. ⁶⁴ The three main denominations of the Holy Roman Empire, namely Calvinism, Catholicism and Protestantism, assumed equal importance. ⁶⁵ The state’s interests took precedence over that of the Church; political absolutism was enforced. ⁶⁶ In England a House of Commons’ letter of complaint against King Charles, which was also endorsed by Cromwell, had unexpected consequences. ⁶⁷ The complaint was intended to put the Parliament’s control over the king’s decisions into effect. ⁶⁸ The ensuing heated discussion, however, split the House of Commons and the motion was carried by a small majority only. ⁶⁹ This caused two civil wars in which Cromwell and the Parliamentary cavalry he formed, called the *Ironsides*, played a decisive role. ⁷⁰ Once he seized power, he had the king executed and entered into a loose union with Ireland and Scotland. ⁷¹ Especially in Ireland countless numbers of Catholics, women and children among them, had to pay with their lives for his success. ⁷² As yet it can not be predicted how his rule will end and what the consequences will be.

Part SIX

CHAPTER 6

1 They do not speak peaceably, but devise false accusations against those who live quietly in the land.

2 European nations are in the process of usurping as many territories as possible in America, Asia and Africa. 3 While Spain and Portugal's ambitions appear to be reasonably sated, other countries, chief among them England, France and the Netherlands, develop ever greater appetites. 4 Every one of them is eager to secure a substantial slice of the pie. 5 The indigenous peoples are treated like goods which can either be exploited or destroyed. 6 While in Christian Europe they preach freedom and equality, those same values are abused by the same Christians in the New World. 7 Thanks to Cromwell the democratisation process initiated in England ended in tyranny; after his death the monarchy was reinstated. 8 But questions still need to be answered; wounds have not yet healed. 9 Other European wars also leave scars which are provisionally addressed by the Peace of Münster and the Treaty of Osnabrück, but by no means mended.

10 Moreover, Europe seems to be ailing from the classical Greek syndrome. 11 Common sense should now prevail; mind and spirit are the philosophers' and scholars' motto. 12 Religious wars had made many people despair of religion. 13 The newly established Christian Churches and communities which had inspired so many positive hopes a century ago, later proved to be no less cruel than the Roman Catholics. 14 In some places they act in an even crueller and more terrible manner, and all in the name of the Gospel. 15 Their behaviour casts a negative light on the Holy Scriptures and even God himself – for that reason outsiders now reject Him or even declare Him as non-existent. 16 A new elite of thinkers which questions everything, but also has all the answers and solutions, made a name for themselves. 17 One has turned away from God and created ideals instead. 18 Free thinking, freedom of action, living freely, all this was raised to the glory of the altar. 19 It is no wonder that most followers of the new ideology are convinced that absolute freedom for everyone is an achievable goal and the right path towards world peace.

20 It has all been seen before, it has all been tried by the ancient Greeks, truly, there is nothing new under the sun. 21 But what those worshippers of reason forget is: the LORD, the Creator, has equipped the world with certain mechanisms which can not be bypassed if one wants to establish a peaceful future. 22 Honour God, love they neighbour as thyself and don't do onto others what you don't want others to do unto you! 23 These commandments are connected to certain duties. 24 And it is only when man honours these duties that he can enjoy his freedom. 25 Provided

others do the same. ²⁶ But because the LORD knows how weak people are, he has given them the Torah and the Koran to aid them. ²⁷ No state can justly function without the concrete application of the Torah or the Koran; no man can live a just life without putting the teachings of the Gospels into practise. ²⁸ Therefore all the new-fangled ideas are like an avalanche of debris; noisy and destructive, and yielding nothing of lasting value. ²⁹ In the end man himself is the one who has been cheated. ³⁰ This is an age of hypocrisy. ³¹ Religious leaders pretend to be acting in God's name and in the process they and their henchmen break all of God's commandments. ³² The so-called free thinkers promise freedom and bread while some of them keep slaves and servants and others endorse the colonisation of foreign countries as progress.

³³ The Ottoman rulers could not come to terms with their failure. ³⁴ Time and again they attempted to advance into the heart of Europe. ³⁵ Eventually the grand vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha was instructed by Sultan Mehmet to conquer Vienna. ³⁶ The march took the Ottoman army months to complete. ³⁷ On the way they looted and destroyed countless villages, fortresses and cities. ³⁸ Their atrocities got worse, the closer they got to Vienna. ³⁹ Many regions of the Burgenland and Lower Austria were utterly destroyed; alas none of their populations are still alive to tell the tale. ⁴⁰ The siege began when the troops reached Vienna at the height of summer. ⁴¹ News of the Ottomans' atrocities reached Vienna and other European cities in no time and everyone was scared to death, but everything that could be done to come to Vienna's aid was promptly arranged. ⁴² Regiments from Poland, Saxony and Bavaria were on their way. ⁴³ But it took time and Vienna's population increasingly panicked, particularly since the Ottomans, confident of their victory, surrounded the city ever more tightly and menacingly. ⁴⁴ Digging tunnels and placing mines under the fortifications, the attackers worked their way closer and closer to the city. ⁴⁵ Moreover, they fired at tall buildings in the city itself, including St. Stephen's Cathedral and the Capuchin Church. ⁴⁶ There was a food shortage in Vienna and diseases spread rapidly. ⁴⁷ It was only a matter of days before the city would fall if the promised help would not arrive. ⁴⁸ But Kara Mustafa Pasha also became impatient and did everything in his power to finally take the city. ⁴⁹ When he heard that the auxiliary troops for Vienna were already close, he prepared his army and drew up a plan to conquer the city. ⁵⁰ Despite being warned by his generals, he acted hastily and strategically unwise when he commanded the attack. ⁵¹ This proved to be the Ottomans' downfall. ⁵² While they stormed at Vienna they suddenly had Christian troops in their back. ⁵³ Once the Polish king John Sobieski arrived with his army, he quickly turned the battle in favour of the Christians. ⁵⁴ The Ottomans hastily fled the battlefield. ⁵⁵ Naturally somebody had to be blamed for the defeat. ⁵⁶ Kara Mustafa Pasha had Ibrahim

Pasha executed. ⁵⁷ Not long after the sultan had Kara Mustafa Pasha strangled in Belgrade. ⁵⁸ Out of gratitude for Vienna's liberation the Catholic Church introduced the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary.

⁵⁹ The Jewish communities scattered throughout the diaspora had problems of their own. ⁶⁰ Based on his utterances, the synagogue in Amsterdam felt compelled to exclude and ban Baruch Spinoza from its community. ⁶¹ The community leaders saw no other way as he did not retract his doubts about the Jewish doctrines and advocated peculiar theological and philosophical viewpoints. ⁶² The Jewish community in Izmir saw itself faced with an entirely different case. ⁶³ One of their members publicly announced that he was a prophet. ⁶⁴ As people like that are generally obstinate and considerably impair communal life, he was summarily banished. ⁶⁵ But a combination of events only strengthened the young man's convictions. ⁶⁶ After meeting Nathan Ashkenazi in Gaza he even believed himself to be the Messiah. ⁶⁷ The persecution and killings of countless Jews in Central and East Europe kindled a strong yearning for the Messiah in many believers and thus also the expectation of His imminent coming. ⁶⁸ The "Messiah" Sabbatai Zevi also profited from this fact and he gained numerous followers. ⁶⁹ Many of them remained faithful to him even after he had converted to Islam. ⁷⁰ His appearance confused and split the already shaken Jews in the diaspora even more. ⁷¹ Sabbatai Zevi died in exile in the Montenegrin part of the Ottoman Empire. ⁷² His followers, however, still caused bewilderment in Jewish and even some Christian European circles.

Part SIX

CHAPTER 7

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us. 2 So that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

³ If only all peoples would recognise the salvation of the LORD! ⁴ Thus many, most of all the Jews, would have to suffer less. ⁵ Once again they have become the target of the European rulers. ⁶ Their motives are not quite apparent. ⁷ Perhaps their discontent over their failures makes them vent their anger through the Jews' persecutions, perhaps there are financial reasons, but maybe the reason is the fact that the Jews are God's Chosen People. ⁸ In Hamburg, at any rate, financial interests seem to be at the forefront as there the anti-Jewish measures only affected the Ashkenazic Jews while the Sephardic Jews, which profited the city, were granted easements. ⁹ Frederick William of Prussia may also have been motivated by economic reasons when he prohibited the Jews to act as competitors to the Christian guilds. ¹⁰ Far worse, even more tragic, however, is Charles', the

Habsburg emperor's, decree which restricted the freedom of sons of Jewish families to marry. ¹¹ Only the oldest son was allowed to enter into matrimony, and that only after his father's death. ¹² Who is not reminded of Egypt, the midwives and the Pharaoh. ¹³ Although times have changed, anxiety and hatred about the Jews are still being fuelled; even the methods of harassment have not substantially changed.

¹⁴ Let us now change from following the fate of the Jews to that of the nations and empires. ¹⁵ The Russian tsar Peter waged war on several fronts. ¹⁶ He was not very successful against the Turks, but in his war against the Swedes he did, however, conquer new territories in the north-east of Europe. ¹⁷ He had himself built a new residence, made St. Petersburg Russia's new capital and called himself emperor. ¹⁸ After his death his wife Catherine took the throne, at least nominally. ¹⁹ Catherine came from humble origins, born Marta Helena Skavronska she was baptised after the Roman Catholic rite. ²⁰ An orphan, she grew up in the family of a Protestant theologian. ²¹ After she had met the tsar, she converted to the Russian Orthodox faith and adopted the name Catherine. ²² As tsarina she assigned most of her tasks to Alexander Danilovich Menshikov, her husband's former confidant.

²³ While Catherine was on the throne in St. Petersburg, another woman became queen of Sweden, albeit only for a short time. ²⁴ Her name was Ulrika Eleonora. ²⁵ She was well-versed in affairs of the state as she represented her brother, King Charles, whenever he was not available for administrative or health reasons. ²⁶ It was therefore no surprise when she became queen after his demise. ²⁷ Having governed the nation herself for a year, she abdicated in favour of her husband. ²⁸ Prior to that Anne Stuart had tried ruling the island states. ²⁹ Initially she held the title Queen of Ireland, then of England and Scotland and, finally, after their unification, the title Queen of Great Britain. ³⁰ Meanwhile in Russia the twelve year old Peter Alexeyevich had become tsar. ³¹ His rein was only of short duration; he contracted smallpox and died. ³² Now Anna Ivanovna was crowned as the ruler of Russia. ³³ Ivan Antonovich followed her onto the throne ³⁴ He was two months old when he became tsar and emperor. ³⁵ Apparently he had no powerful supporters as his reign ended only a year thereafter. ³⁶ He was succeeded by Elizaveta Petrovna Romanova. ³⁷ This had not been the first time that a woman succeeded a child as empress. ³⁸ She ruled with a firm hand, travelled extensively and promoted the fine arts. ³⁹ She had Muslims and Jews missionised and fought them when they did not follow orders. ⁴⁰ She made peace with Sweden; although the Ottoman Empire was losing its strength, she did not attack it. ⁴¹ Since the lost Siege of Belgrade, where Prince Eugene and his troops emerged as the winners, the Ottomans had been unable to book any war victories worth mentioning. ⁴² The

empire has become unstable with inner tension and power struggles which can also be said about Europe in its entirety.

43 The so-call “Christian” occident is torn by wars of succession. 44 Hardly a country is not affected. 45 The wars always concern power, territorial expansion and greed. 46 The Christians evidently have a lot of riches, holdings and power to pass on or bequeath. 47 They therefore totally contradict Jesus of Nazareth’s teachings which they allegedly follow. 48 Jesus died poor and deserted, without land or power. 49 The only thing he had to leave behind was his mother. 50 And he bequeathed her to the only apostle who had not fled, had not hidden and not left him alone in his suffering. 51 In this context Louis–Marie Grignion de Monfort, an ardent Catholic admirer of Jesus’ mother, who was viewed as controversial by the clergy and had recently established an order, must be mentioned. 52 In that order he has Miriam of Nazareth revered as a queen: the queen of humility and compassion, of peace and reconciliation, of advocacy and love.

53 As we are already concerned with powerful women who are also currently affecting the fate of the world, we have to mention some other females of note at this point. 54 There is the mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi, the first born of twenty one children of the Milanese Agnesi family. 55 Just recently she has published her work *Analytical Institutions in Four Books*. 56 And then there is the physician Dorothea Christiane Erxleben. 57 Despite taking care of nine children and her medical practice she used King Frederick’s special permission to gain her doctoral degree at the University of Halle. 58 Let us now turn our attention to Europe’s most powerful woman who had already caused much concern even before her accession to the throne – starting with her parents and extending to the royal courts of England, Spain and more. 59 This is Maria Theresa of the Habsburg Dynasty. 60 She rules with an iron fist, wages wars, enters into peace treaties, implements reforms and promotes education; she displays sheer indefatigable energy as if trying to prove her equality to her male colleagues. 61 She competes with one man in particular, Frederick the Prussian, but has not been successful in her endeavours as yet. 62 She also commits some incredibly nasty outrages. 63 On ordering that all the Jews of Prague had to leave Bohemia within forty days, she merely stated in her decree: “...for several pressing and highly compelling reasons I have decided that no more Jews may be tolerated inside the hereditary kingdom of Bohemia.” 64 One can only guess at the highly compelling reasons. 65 Perhaps the Jews were guilty of not being Catholic; perhaps their trade was too profitable or perhaps somebody once again wanted to profit from their riches. 66 One is tempted to doubt if the plague that had recently ravaged Bohemia was in fact more devastating for the Jews than the rule of *Maria Theresa, by the Grace of God,*

Dowager Empress of the Romans, Queen of Hungary, of Bohemia, of Dalmatia, of Croatia, of Slavonia, of Galicia, of Lodomeria, etc.; Archduchess of Austria; Duchess of Burgundy, of Styria, of Carinthia and of Carniola; Grand Princess of Transylvania; Margravine of Moravia; Duchess of Brabant, of Limburg, of Luxemburg, of Guelders, of Württemberg, of Upper and Lower Silesia, of Milan, of Mantua, of Parma, of Piacenza, of Guastalla, of Auschwitz and of Zator; Princess of Swabia; Princely Countess of Habsburg, of Flanders, of Tyrol, of Hainault, of Kyburg, of Gorizia and of Gradisca; Margravine of Burgau, of Upper and Lower Lusatia; Countess of Namur; Lady of the Wendish Mark and of Mechlin; Dowager Duchess of Lorraine and Bar, Dowager Grand Duchess of Tuscany. ⁶⁷ What could a somebody like Joseph ben Jacob or like Esther bat Isaac possibly do to address the actions of such a powerful woman? ⁶⁸ The Court Jew of Duke Charles Alexander of Württemberg, Joseph ben Issachar Süßkind Oppenheimer, was also unable to save his life after his patron's death. ⁶⁹ He was most brutally murdered and his corpse displayed in a cage as a deterrent for several years.

⁷⁰ We would like to conclude this account with the words of a pious, widowed Jewish housewife and mother of twelve children, Glückel of Hameln, nee Pinkerle, a true queen of humanity. ⁷¹ *The great, merciful God punishes us so we learn to become wise and follow his paths.* ⁷² *Because everything the almighty God bestows on us we have not earned and we can never serve him loyally enough for all his blessings.*

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 1

¹ *Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.*

² *Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance.*

³ There is the world in which we live, but there is also another, one immanent in the first, which we shall call "The World". ⁴ The first one refers to the space-time dimension where humans, animals and plants create a constantly changing whole.

⁵ Here good and evil, the profane and the sacred, the pure and the impure coexist, often with extremely blurred boundaries. ⁶ People rejoice, celebrate, argue, wage war against each other, reconcile and as it was written: everything has its time – love, hate, war, peace and reconciliation. ⁷ "The World" on the other hand consists of a special category of people; people who always know better, who shout the loudest and who possess the ability of transferring their own discontent onto others and convince them of their ideas. ⁸ This has already been observed in Eve's dialogue with the serpent. ⁹ Everything in existence is falsely represented,

portrayed in a different light, far more promising solutions are offered. ¹⁰ One of “The World’s” preferred targets is religion, particularly the belief in monotheism. ¹¹ Even in ancient Egypt the nobles could not dine with the Jews; they found it intolerable as the Hebrews firmly believed in the One God. ¹² In certain circles one had never been able, or only with difficulty, to abide those who belonged to God in a special way or loyally followed him. ¹³ This repulsion connected those of a similar mind-set and led to the emergence of what we label as “The World”. ¹⁴ Thus today, but also untold generations before, in nearly every nation, “The World” exists which for some reason detests the faithful, be they Jews, Christians or Muslims. ¹⁵ Various misdeeds – and there have truly been many - of individual religious communities are used as an excuse. ¹⁶ That these are merely cited as a pretext is evidenced by the fact that most of these wrongdoings date back decades or centuries and are therefore not even topical. ¹⁷ A patently obvious move which reveals that the true reason for the aversion, even hostility, can be found in the religious communities’ adherence to God’s commandments and their respect for His authority.

¹⁸ “The World” rejects any kind of order, hierarchy and moral standards. ¹⁹ People like that are virtually obsessed by the urge to destroy the existing order and impose their own rules on the world. ²⁰ In truth they are poor, pitiable wretches who have neither recognised human nor God’s love, let alone accepted it. ²¹ Sadly they succeed only too often in misleading the broad masses who generally live an ordered life, but are confused by daily problems, injustices and poverty. ²² Rulers and religious leaders – particularly those of the Catholic Church – the upper class in secular and religious circles, are partly responsible for the plight. ²³ Their remorselessness, their lack of empathy, frequently renders them egotistical, greedy, self-righteous and unapproachable to those in need of advice, comforting or refuge. ²⁴ Their obstinate behaviour makes it easy for “The World’s” emissaries to capture the masses and convince them that not the unjust believers but God and people’s faith in him are to blame for everything. ²⁵ Thus the population becomes doubtful and confused, which eventually leads to chaotic riots. ²⁶ Especially present day people are witnesses and participants in such a “world improvement orgy”. ²⁷ The conditions in society really can not be glossed over, the secular and Church rulers’ irresponsibility can not be denied, the people’s discontent is justified. ²⁸ And yet it is wrong to follow “The World” which leads everyone and in the end itself into chaos. ²⁹ On closer scrutiny one can discern the characteristics of the leaders of “The World” and the harbingers of the current catastrophe. ³⁰ A father, who has sired four children but chose to hand them over to the poor house and therefore their imminent deaths instead of caring for them, proclaims the new maxim and claims to be a philosopher and great pedagogue. ³¹ People who preach

equality and fraternity call the Jews “calculating animals” and black Africans the “offspring of apes”.³² They announce equal rights for everybody, yet decapitate young girls and women just because they want to live together in a monastic community.³³ They want to abolish Christianity because its creator was a Jew.³⁴ The Prophet and the sacred Koran are regarded with scorn and derision.³⁵ The Torah is viewed as the cause of all the evils in the world; the people of Turkey are considered to be ignorant and naïve.³⁶ Egypt was conquered and scientists accompanied the soldiers to gloss over the fact that this was essentially solely about extracting the maximum profits from the country and its treasures.³⁷ Thus “The World” exposes its own hypocrisy with regard to liberty, equality and fraternity.³⁸ Those values are their noble objectives, but only theirs and those of kindred spirits.³⁹ What constitutes the difference between the arbitrariness of emperors, kings, the nobility and the Church hierarchy and the arbitrariness of the new rulers?⁴⁰ The only difference is that now there is even more despotism, injustice and bloodshed.⁴¹ The hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of decapitated heads of this era are not mainly those of the State’s and the Church’s representatives, the oligarchy.⁴² More than eighty out of every hundred of them belong to the poor – the peasants and workers who were meant to benefit from the new world order.⁴³ But the peasants and workers, rich in experience, quickly understood and soon recognised “The World’s” true objectives.⁴⁴ Those courageous enough to point this out signed their own death warrants when their alleged liberators became their executioners.

⁴⁵ Currently the act of thinking alone is dangerous.⁴⁶ The thirst for blood is so great “The World’s” representatives even have each other decapitated – a “headless new world”.⁴⁷ And, of course, a new world also needs a suitable god.⁴⁸ “The World” therefore endeavours to create a new religion and a new deity and proclaims the “Cult of the Supreme Being”.⁴⁹ New shrines are erected and feast days introduced; people have to swear an oath to the “Supreme Being”.⁵⁰ The days of the week and the months are renamed, a new calendar is devised; instead of the seven day week, the *décade* is introduced, the day now has ten hours, the hour one hundred minutes.

⁵¹ At some stage this whole nightmare will end, let us hope in the not too distant future.⁵² But “The World’s” atrocities, the stench of the blood which has intoxicated so many, will continue to affect people for a long time.⁵³ It will be a long, gloomy night; too much evil has occurred which will beget further evil.⁵⁴ The darkening of the mind will cast its shadows for generations to come.⁵⁵ There will be more bloodshed, more conquests, oppression, exploitation and enslavement.⁵⁶ As has been written: *You shall have no other gods before me; you*

shall not bow down to them or worship them. ⁵⁷ *For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.* ⁵⁸ There is no reason that this will not come to pass. ⁵⁹ One does not have to be a prophet to realise that the LORD always fulfils his promises. ⁶⁰ Let us thus turn our attention away from “The World” and towards the events in various parts of the world. ⁶¹ Many of these are sufficiently known and we shall therefore only mention a few which have been somewhat neglected during the plethora of resounding news.

⁶² Among the Eastern European Jews a mystical movement developed under the leadership of Rabbi Yisroel ben Eliezer. ⁶³ The movement quickly gathered a large following, but is disputed in traditional Judaism. ⁶⁴ Due to Poland’s segmentation between Russia, Austria and Prussia the resident Jews also became citizens of other realms. ⁶⁵ The disciples of the above mentioned Rabbi Eliezer organised a remarkable *Aliyah* – the immigration to the Promised Land. ⁶⁶ There are now settlements in Tiberia, Safed, Hebron and Jerusalem. ⁶⁷ The Austrian emperor Joseph granted the Jews of Bohemia a certain amount of religious freedom with his Edict of Tolerance. ⁶⁸ His Patent of Toleration granted the Jews of Vienna and Lower Austria access to trade and agricultural professions. ⁶⁹ The Russian Tsarina Catherine permitted the wealthy Jews to become members of the guilds. ⁷⁰ Thus she ended the mediaeval ban from the professions and guilds for the Jews. ⁷¹ The Prussian statesman von Dohm appealed to the Christians to treat the Jews as their brothers and sisters and fellow human beings. ⁷² Numerous discoveries and inventions eased the people’s labour.

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 2

¹ *I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

² On the political front the French Republic still takes centre stage. ³ It dominates many parts of Europe. ⁴ Napoleon is the First Consul of the Republic. ⁵ European monarchies entered into various alliances and waged several wars against Napoleon in order to halt the progress of liberalism and thus secure the nobility’s power. ⁶ These are turbulent times. ⁷ Some states not only fight against France but also conduct other wars, some of them against several nations simultaneously. ⁸ Napoleon is on his own against the rest of the disunited Europe and remains a difficult challenger for a long time.

9 Since the French Revolution the Catholic Church's authority has been damaged. 10 Napoleon offered the pope a concordat dictated by him which substantially affects ecclesiastical matters. 11 The pope signed it to safeguard the freedom of the oppressed Church in France. 12 He also crowned Napoleon as emperor in the church of Notre Dame in Paris. 13 Nevertheless Napoleon later annexed the Papal State, had the pope arrested and brought to France. 14 Not until the sixth attempt, after Napoleon's army had returned defeated and weakened from Russia, did the allied states succeed in beating the French emperor. 15 Now new borders were agreed at the Congress of Vienna; the balance between the five major powers was re-established.

16 Not much later Austria, Prussia and Russia formed a confederation based on Christian principles; it was called the *Holy Alliance* and intended to guard the peace in all of Europe. 17 But peace is not merely the opposite of war, something that can be achieved or even preserved by military force. 18 The population, particularly the student body, has been infected by the idea of liberty and national consciousness; the people demand the freedom of personal lifestyle, education for all and national popular sovereignty. 19 Freedom and liberalism are the new sacred slogans with which "The World" manipulates society. 20 Belgium and Greece have gained their freedom from the Netherlands and the Ottoman Empire respectively. 21 The European parts of the Ottoman Empire, weakened by various uprisings, are additionally threatened by Egypt. 22 There the governor Muhammad Ali Pasha seized power. 23 Under the command of his son Ibrahim Pasha his armies occupied the Holy Land and Syria where he had his son installed as wāli. 24 Ibrahim Pasha proved to be a wise and tolerant ruler. 25 He enforced the equality of Muslims and Christians thereby earning the hostile disposition of religious institutions. 26 Under his rule Jews and Christians could also be elected to the municipal council of Jerusalem.

27 In America liberal ideas had already been put into practice before the French Revolution; the USA was born in the war of the settlers against Great Britain, their country of origin. 28 Meanwhile wars of independence are waged in South America against the colonial power of Spain from where quite a number of independent states have already emerged. 29 On the old continent the tradespeople, factory owners and so-called bourgeoisie, who have become wealthy due to the economic progress, feel restricted in the rigid feudal structures and become the pioneers of liberalism. 30 The Holy Alliance, in its endeavours to preserve faith and morale in Europe, has its work cut out. 31 The freedom of the press, assembly and association as well as the freedom of the universities is restricted. 32 The military fight riots and revolutionary uprisings.

³³ While historical changes in society were virtually non-perceptible during a lifetime in the ancient world, one now frequently becomes painfully aware of them. ³⁴ The rapidly accelerating and all-pervading shifts are caused by inventions and discoveries which for some time now are occurring ever more quickly and are put into practice. ³⁵ This not only impacts on the economy and living conditions, it also shapes man's feelings, his mind-set and his worldview in hitherto unexpected ways. ³⁶ This is the Europeans', who are already dominating the world, finest hour. ³⁷ Their confidence is enormous. ³⁸ They are utterly convinced that their race is far superior to others and therefore feel called upon to spread their civilisation, the ideals of democracy and the historical progress to all the other parts of the world. ³⁹ There is even talk of a "divine mission". ⁴⁰ Empty rhetoric meant to disguise the inhuman manner in which foreign territories in the newly discovered world are being conquered. ⁴¹ The natives and their needs are ignored. ⁴² When the indigenous population tries to defend its livelihood it does not stand a chance against the white settlers who are supported by government troops and is severely punished. ⁴³ Not even children are spared in the ensuing massacres.

⁴⁴ The US government offers the native population resettlement contracts and nobody is legally obliged to leave their land. ⁴⁵ In practice, however, those who refuse are harassed until they give up. ⁴⁶ Furthermore, the resettlements are carried out in such a cruel manner that thousands die on the way. ⁴⁷ Instead of benefitting from the progress of civilisation, the American Indians lose everything: their dignity, their freedom, their land and thousands of them also their lives – and all that in the name of freedom and democracy. ⁴⁸ But life does not only fundamentally change for the indigenous peoples of foreign continents.

⁴⁹ Europe is dominated by the industrial revolution. ⁵⁰ A new class of people emerges: the wage workers. ⁵¹ Living conditions in rural areas are extremely harsh despite agricultural reforms and the subsequent abolition of hereditary serfdom and feudalism. ⁵² More and more impoverished peasants therefore move to the cities where they seek employment in factories or the mining industry. ⁵³ They work for a pittance in unhealthy conditions and are no better off than they were as bonded labourers or serfs in the past. ⁵⁴ Children also have to work in order for families to survive. ⁵⁵ All this is even further aggravated by crop failures and epidemics; mass poverty ensues. ⁵⁶ Time-proven traditions which once helped people to master their fate are no longer effective. ⁵⁷ Workers express their desperation by destroying machines or even entire factories. ⁵⁸ Social protests are brutally repressed by the military. ⁵⁹ Two philosophers and journalists, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, were the first to systematically address the pauperisation

of the broad masses and search for solutions. ⁶⁰ They founded a secret society they called the *Communist League* and published the Communist Manifesto declaring their findings.

⁶¹ Let us now take a look at what the advocacy of freedom achieved for the Jews in the diaspora who existed on the fringe of society as small traders and money lenders. ⁶² Some European countries issued decrees granting Jews citizenship, but frequently with substantial limitations. ⁶³ However, they are still hated among the general population. ⁶⁴ In Würzburg severe anti-Semitic riots spilled over onto other cities. ⁶⁵ The Russian Tsar Nicholas issued a series of anti-Jewish regulations. ⁶⁶ In his country the Jews were subject to enormous attempts to convert them. ⁶⁷ The resident Catholics and Protestants, however, do not fare any better. ⁶⁸ Slavery is gradually officially outlawed, yet unofficially still exists; the slave trade is replaced by smuggling. ⁶⁹ With regard to killing, plundering and occupying foreign territories the children of the French Revolution are proper specialists compared to the crusaders and the Muslim conquerors. ⁷⁰ Due to technical achievements they are in a position to manipulate the weak at a whim and oppress them terribly. ⁷¹ Liberalism eventually turns out to be a farce performed by “The World”. ⁷² For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 3

¹ *They are enclosed in their own fat; with their mouth they speak proudly. ² They have now encompassed us in our steps; they have set their eyes, bowing down to the earth.*

³ The mighty of this world are still fighting for resources and markets. ⁴ While they are competing with each other, armed conflicts occasionally erupt, but also, if rather less frequently, agreements develop or colonial territories are peacefully exchanged. ⁵ Meanwhile in Europe a new major power emerges from the North German Confederation: the German Reich. ⁶ It now also wants its slice of the colonial pie and enters into the race for foreign territories, particularly in Africa. ⁷ If you possess superior military strength, you only have to threaten to gain your objective. ⁸ With this strategy the culturally far more advanced Chinese and Japanese empires were forced to admit the “western Barbarians” into their country and obey their orders. ⁹ In Europe many peoples are still oppressed by foreign rule. ¹⁰ The Italians are fighting for their independence from Austria and the Spanish Bourbons and dream of a united kingdom of Italy. ¹¹ The Polish, whose territories once extended from the Baltic as far as the Black Sea, but who no longer

have their own state, again attempted to free its part occupied by Russia and paid a heavy price for its endeavours: executions, exile and the abolishment of Polish as an official language. ¹² The Poles self-conception as the sacrificial lamb once more proves to be correct. ¹³ The Balkan peoples, too, who mainly live under Ottoman rule, strive for national self-determination. ¹⁴ The Russian Empire tried to take advantage of the opportunity to gain direct access to the Mediterranean Sea by supporting the Slavs in their war against the Ottomans. ¹⁵ It successfully ousted the Ottomans from the continent of Europe. ¹⁶ But the European powers had their own agenda in the Balkans and did not want Russia to get in their way. ¹⁷ At the Congress of Berlin they therefore significantly changed the agreements reached under the Treaty of San Stefano; thus the winners on the battlefield became the losers in the diplomatic arena.

¹⁸ After having liberated themselves from colonial rule, the Latin American states frequently engage in civil wars where liberal and conservative powers fight each other for political power. ¹⁹ Internal political conflicts are exploited by other states to gain influence in the countries where they once rendered military support to one of the conflicting sides. ²⁰ In the USA opinions differ about the slavery issue. ²¹ Eventually the Southern States left the Union and founded their own confederation. ²² The ensuing brutal civil war finally ended with the victory of the Northern States. ²³ But the same old spirit still prevails in the South. ²⁴ A secret society called the Ku-Klux-Klan persecutes and terrorises the Negroes and their protectors. ²⁵ Its members are also extreme Catholic and Jew haters. ²⁶ The surviving American Indians are also still in the way of the Whites. ²⁷ After their resettlement they had been cooped up in reservations, but once it became evident that the ground in those reservations contained gold and silver they were simply reduced in size. ²⁸ Yet this was still not enough: somebody thought it would be an elegant solution to the Indian problem if the children would be deprived of their parents' influence. ²⁹ Thus Indian children were torn away from their culture at a young age and educated at boarding schools at the state's expense to turn them into modern Americans. ³⁰ Amidst all this hopelessness a ray of hope suddenly appeared in the form of a prophet called Wovoka. ³¹ He claimed the Christian God had revealed himself to him to say that the Indians would reach God's Kingdom under the condition that they behaved peacefully towards the Whites. ³² He also claimed that God had taught him a new dance which was supposed to lead the Indians to a new, peaceful era. ³³ His teachings inspired new hope and were well received among the Indians. ³⁴ Sadly an overzealous shaman interpreted them as a weapon against the white man and countless Indians consequently paid for this with their lives.

³⁵ In China a man named Hong Xiuquan claims to have been commissioned by the “Heavenly Father” to rid the world of the demons. ³⁶ Together with his numerous followers he fights the imperial Qing Dynasty whose members he perceives to be the demons of his vision. ³⁷ He founded the “Taiping Heavenly Kingdom” and became its ecclesiastical and secular ruler. ³⁸ The landowners were dispossessed, the slaves freed. ³⁹ He translated the Bible into Chinese and prohibited all other religions. ⁴⁰ The enjoyment of stimulants such as alcohol, tobacco and opium was punishable by death, as was adultery and homosexuality. ⁴¹ Bahá'u'lláh, a prophet of Persian origin living in exile, also believes himself to be a chosen one. ⁴² He alleges that God progressively manifests himself and that he, Bahá'u'lláh, is his voice for this era. ⁴³ He proclaims the fundamental unity of all religions and advocates a peaceful dialogue between them. ⁴⁴ In his opinion man's actual vocation is the service to all of mankind.

⁴⁵ So-called revival movements gain increasing prominence in Christendom. ⁴⁶ They emphasise personal conversion and a lifestyle modelled on the Gospels. ⁴⁷ In this context we must also mention the humanist Henry Dunant whose views were anchored in the revival movement and who acted in accordance with the Gospels when faced with the thousands of ignored injured and dead left behind on the battlefield of Solferino. ⁴⁸ At his own expense he provided first aid and relief supplies and provisionally cared for the injured with the help of the local civilian population. ⁴⁹ He recognised God's divine call and followed it. ⁵⁰ It was his idea to found aid organisations to tend the wounded in case of a war. ⁵¹ To promote his aim, he travelled all over Europe. ⁵² His endeavours eventually led to the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. ⁵³ His social engagement did not gain him any personal advantages; quite the contrary, in fact – his staff betrayed him, he was barred from the committee and lived in poverty. ⁵⁴ And yet he stayed true to his vocation right up to his death. ⁵⁵ He campaigned for peaceful solutions to international conflicts and improved conditions for prisoners of war. ⁵⁶ Protecting workers who were exploited by their employers on the one hand and exposed to the atheistic and, in his opinion, corrupt influence of the International Workers Association on the other, was a concern close to his heart. ⁵⁷ While individuals strive to reconcile humanity with its Creator, the reality is quite different. ⁵⁸ People are oppressed by political and religious leaders and played against each other. ⁵⁹ They are being chased by profit-seekers, robbed or violated in many other ways. ⁶⁰ In Syria thousands of Maronite Christians were thus killed by incited Muslims of the Druze faith while the authorities, instead of helping them, indirectly came to the Druzes' aid. ⁶¹ A private individual, a just person by the name of Abd el-Kader, campaigns on behalf of the Christians and saves them from a massacre. ⁶² In New Zealand the government breaks the contract it has

entered into with the Maori which had guaranteed them unimpeded possession of land, agricultural areas, forests and fishing grounds. ⁶³ In the South Pacific natives are being recruited to work on plantations or on European ships by deception and blackmail, but also through raw physical force.

⁶⁴ After an attempted assassination on the Tsar in Russia, outbreaks of hatred are expressed through violent excesses against the Jews. ⁶⁵ On a huge scale Jews are being raped and killed; their homes and businesses are ransacked. ⁶⁶ The horrific events coin a new word: pogrom. ⁶⁷ The Christian Armenians refuse to pay double taxes to the Ottomans and the local Kurdish tribal leaders. ⁶⁸ The rulers seize the opportunity to consolidate and unify the realm through the Muslims' dominance over the Christians. ⁶⁹ Terrible pogroms of the Armenians ensure; Europe as well as America do nothing to intervene. ⁷⁰ Theodor Herzl, a young Jewish man frustrated by his fate, begins to conceive the idea of becoming the advocate of a Jewish state as the home of all Jewish people. ⁷¹ The congress of the like-minded he organises in Basel is attended by thousands of Jews from all over the world. ⁷² A hopeful sign, indeed, but one should not rejoice just yet!

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 4

¹ *LORD, how long wilt Thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my precious soul from the lions.*

² In China a rebellion broke out against the intruders who were blamed for destroying the natural environment and social harmony. ³ During the uprising the Christianised compatriots were also viewed as the enemy, persecuted and cruelly murdered. ⁴ In the war between Japan and Russia over the dominance in Manchuria and Korea a major European power was defeated by an Asian country for the first time. ⁵ Japan, which has meanwhile been modernised after the western model, has developed into a major nation with aspirations to expand. ⁶ Intoxicated by technological progress, people believe they can control the course of events and even the forces of nature. ⁷ The sinking of the celebrated and deemed indestructible world's largest cruise ship would change that view. ⁸ It was a sign of the times that called for reflection. ⁹ Another sign followed when the heir to the throne of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire was assassinated in Sarajevo; the portents were ominous. ¹⁰ Yet some heads of state, blinded by their hunger for power, wanted to profit from the assassination. ¹¹ What was formally declared to be a lesson that had to be taught to the Serbs, escalated in a war that sucked in the most diverse nations. ¹² It was fought in Europe, in the Middle East, in Africa, East Asia and on the world's oceans. ¹³ Millions of soldiers and civilians killed and

maimed, countless orphans and widows, burnt soil – those were the sad consequences of irresponsible human action and misuse of technical expertise.

¹⁴ But once the ghosts have been summoned they do not willingly leave again; even after the bloody showdown between the major powers during the World War they continued their St. Vitus' dance in Russia. ¹⁵ Its population was divided between revolutionary reds and conservative whites who killed each other. ¹⁶ The "red" ideology won, the USSR was founded but the madness does not stop: the revolution now devours its own children. ¹⁷ Major upheavals, bringing much suffering to individual demographic groups, also occurred in the Ottoman Empire, whose foundations had been fragile for a while and which was heteronomous and finally disintegrated during the World War. ¹⁸ After the war of liberation the Turkish officer Mustafa Kemal Pasha proclaimed the Republic of Turkey as the successor to the Ottoman Empire. ¹⁹ A so-called League of Nations was founded to prevent the horrors of future wars; but whatever is a purely human endeavour and not based on God can not guarantee lasting peace. ²⁰ The years after the World War were characterised by unemployment, shortages of consumer goods, famine, diseases and misery. ²¹ The situation worsened when the USA also experienced a terrible banking crisis and economic depression after the collapse of the New York stock exchange. ²² Europe's parliamentary governments were too weak to get the situation under control; a strong hand was called for. ²³ The first one of these was Mussolini who headed the state as dictator in Italy. ²⁴ In Germany, during the general disorientation of the Weimar Republic, combat units promoting willpower and determination, emphasising national sentiment and comradeship and wanting to enforce discipline and order, also made a name for themselves. ²⁵ They inform the population who is to blame for all the misery: the Jews. ²⁶ Subsequently they declare war on the Jews, but also on other socially "inferior" as well as all not like-minded people. ²⁷ From these radical groups a political party eventually emerged headed by skilful rabble-rousers promising the masses work, prosperity and national prestige until it finally secured the popular vote. ²⁸ Two decrees by the president of the Reich and an enabling act abolished civil rights and incapacitated the parliament.

²⁹ All power now rested with one Führer. ³⁰ The country was in the grip of propaganda and terror. ³¹ The so-called de-Jewing began with the boycott of Jewish businesses, medical surgeries and law firms and escalated in brutal acts of violence against the Jews. ³² Armament revived the economy thereby raising the general spirit and playing into the Führer's hands. ³³ Austria was annexed by the German Reich. ³⁴ The Sudetenland was integrated, the rest of Czechoslovakia occupied. ³⁵ Within a few short weeks Poland was being overrun by German tanks;

thereafter other European states were defeated one after another. ³⁶ The horrors of the previous war had hardly been forgotten when the world found itself embroiled in yet another war. ³⁷ The Führer's objective was to establish the "Greater Germanic Reich" extending up to the Ural. ³⁸ But this war was not merely concerned with territorial expansion. ³⁹ *Eugenics, inferior ethnic groups, the destruction of worthless life* were the slogans of the time. ⁴⁰ The Aryans were to rule, everyone else was denied human dignity. ⁴¹ Scientists and physicians loyal to the regime transferred Darwin's theory of evolution onto a societal dimension to lend the current political ideology a scientific air. ⁴² The mass exterminations started. ⁴³ So-called concentration camps were built in the German Reich and the occupied territories. ⁴⁴ There millions of people who were viewed as inferior by the new ideology, particularly the Jews, were murdered, exploited by forced labour, used for medical experiments and starved. ⁴⁵ In three thousand years "The World" had not succeeded in obliterating the Jewish people from the earth. ⁴⁶ Now Satan himself assisted. ⁴⁷ More ingenious than all the medical doctors and academics combined he approached the situation at its roots. ⁴⁸ He unleashed his bloodhounds to sniff out the Jewish genealogies. ⁴⁹ Thus many who had not even suspected that Jewish blood was flowing through their veins were killed. ⁵⁰ Satan knows only too well that God loves the Jewish people unconditionally; even if they have flourished in foreign cultures, they still remain his chosen children. ⁵¹ Inadvertently, however, the devil thus came to God's aid - Satan's failed attempt to exterminate the Jews showed the entire world the secret of God's relationship to his people. ⁵² Viewed from this perspective this terrible tragedy is confirmation for the Jews and simultaneously a revelation for the rest of the world that God's covenant with the chosen people is eternal and that the Jewish people can not be destroyed by anything or anyone. ⁵³ This fact should be heeded by all those who consider themselves to be "God's new chosen people", namely Christians as well as Muslims.

⁵⁴ After the war the defeated were brought to trial for their crimes, while the crimes of the victors, however, remained unprosecuted; they were either covered up or presented as heroic deeds. ⁵⁵ The Catholic Church, which had warned the population about national socialist ideology before the party's rise to power, later on entered into a concordat with them in the hope they would thus not bother it. ⁵⁶ But there were still individual Catholics, priests and bishops among them, who offered resistance. ⁵⁷ One of these, who stayed loyal to Jesus' teachings and consciously sacrificed his life for others, was the Polish Franciscan monk Maximilian Kolbe. ⁵⁸ The Protestant Church initially welcomed the new policies. ⁵⁹ From their ranks grew the religious movement of the *German Christians* who won the Church elections after the establishment of the National Reich Church.

⁶⁰ The German Christians condemned the Old Testament as Jewish and endeavoured to introduce the Arian clauses for Protestant clerics as well. ⁶¹ This was met with rejection by many members of the Church who consequently founded the *Confessing Church*. ⁶² This institution also includes individual Christians who exercised their faith and accepted all the consequences in this historic situation. ⁶³ Here, among others, we have to mention the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who believed that the Christian Church should proclaim God's will not just through words but most of all by demonstrating humanity. ⁶⁴ Like so many others, he also paid with his life for his determination not to betray the principles of the Gospels.

⁶⁵ The Indian lawyer Gandhi too consistently lived by his faith. ⁶⁶ He called his fellow human beings to non-violent resistance against the British colonial rule. ⁶⁷ Praying and fasting he preached peaceful disobedience against the unjust laws and a peaceful acceptance of the subsequent suffering. ⁶⁸ He eventually reached his goal, but paid for it with his life. ⁶⁹ An increasing number of Jews have realized that an autonomous state for all the Jews is their only alternative, particularly since they had been confronted with the same hostile attitude even after the war, especially in East European countries. ⁷⁰ During the ensuing rush to the "Land of the Fathers" they had to act conspiratorially due to the British government's quota policy. ⁷¹ The state of Israel was proclaimed directly after the British had withdrawn. ⁷² That very same night the young state was attacked from several fronts; a wave of hatred erupted whereby it was endeavoured to chase the Jews into the ocean and eradicate Israel from the map.

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 5

¹ *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cleverness. ² If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*

³ Before we commemorate Jerusalem, let us mention the cities, tribes, peoples and countries whose memories must also be preserved. ⁴ They are: the Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Gambia, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Mauritius and Malawi. ⁵ Neither should we forget Zambia, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Senegal, the Seychelles, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia and Uganda. ⁶ We shall also remember Honduras, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Aden. ⁷ Furthermore let us recall the countries of Bahrain, Brunei, Qatar, Kuwait, the Maldives, Oman, Singapore, Malta and Cyprus. ⁸ Remembered also must be the Fiji Island, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria,

Gabon, Djibouti and Madagascar. ⁹ Not to be forgotten as well are Comoros, Cameroon, Togo, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and the New Hebrides. ¹⁰ They all fell victim to the European nations' greed for power and riches. ¹¹ Two highly praised democracies, Great Britain and France, were right at the forefront.

¹² The above listed countries liberated themselves from the clutches of the colonial powers; some peacefully, some violently. ¹³ For decades and centuries they had been exploited, plundered, oppressed and enslaved. ¹⁴ Of course Great Britain, France and all the other colonisers did not view their actions as crimes; in their opinion they even brought progress to those countries through European civilisation. ¹⁵ What an insidious way to sugar-coat one's atrocities. ¹⁶ Particularly those nations responsible for the most human sacrifices fastidiously count the others' victims and are outraged. ¹⁷ The high of hypocrisy. ¹⁸ The enslaved peoples will not find peace even for decades to come after their liberation as their borders have been decided on the drawing board by the cold-blooded imperialists. ¹⁹ Thus tribes and peoples became mindlessly and ominously mixed up so that feuds and wars are already pre-destined. ²⁰ Yet another clever calculation by the former colonists as they can now sell arms, munitions and other materials to the warring territories. ²¹ If there are outrageous sins, this is surly one of them. ²² And now the perpetrators want to teach democracy to the victims.

²³ After the two catastrophic World Wars and their horrific aftermath people turned increasingly to God; an intensive piety is noticeable among the European Christians, especially the Catholics. ²⁴ The Austrians in particular are grateful to God as they are convinced that their country only escaped relatively lightly because Jesus' mother interceded on their behalf. ²⁵ But the Almighty also showed great mercy to other peoples. ²⁶ After two thousand years the Jews were given back their own land; even if only a fraction of it and at the price of much bloodshed. ²⁷ The Muslims are finally being taken seriously by the powerful of this world because God has given them most of the earth's oil resources. ²⁸ Thus God granted the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims the opportunity for a new beginning through his divine grace.

²⁹ The world is divided into two blocs. ³⁰ From the ruins of World War II communism has spread over close to half of mankind as an alternative to capitalism. ³¹ Sadly the communists, whose ideology is essentially identical to that of the Bible, have disowned God. ³² They deny his existence and oppress the faithful. ³³ They judge the faith based on the excesses of the respective religious communities instead of the Holy Scriptures inspired by God. ³⁴ Thus they have

missed their chance of putting the ideals of equality, solidarity and brotherly love into practice with God's help.

³⁵ Instead the communist countries barricaded themselves behind the Iron Curtain in order to fend off the aggressive, consumption-oriented western hunger for domination. ³⁶ Yet their own populations are being spied on, controlled, and just like the Churches once eliminated undesirable persons through the Inquisition, the communists now follow suit, only even more intensively and brutally while using intricate psychological torture. ³⁷ The two blocs are hostile to each other and permanently threatening to wage war. ³⁸ They don't attack each other directly, but demonstrate their power in third countries such as Korea and Vietnam.

³⁹ Yugoslavia, India, Egypt and Indonesia have founded the *Non-Aligned Movement*. ⁴⁰ This was created to demonstrate that a peaceful coexistence without wars and military blocs was possible. ⁴¹ Unfortunately the movement did not achieve much as some of the leaders were more concerned with personal ambition than peace. ⁴² While in the fifties most people tried to look forward, rebuilt their cities and tried to suppress the gruesome memories of the Second World War, all this changed in the sixties. ⁴³ People were better off, they were materially secure, the war was suppressed from their conscience. ⁴⁴ A time of searching and questioning commenced. ⁴⁵ Since "The World" is also omnipresent in the modern era, it knew how to skilfully exploit the arising events for its own objectives. ⁴⁶ Rock music, feminism, student unrests, the hippie phenomenon, abortion, New Age, drugs, works of art and culture under the influence of LSD, the gay movement, all these are areas for "The World" to cast its nets. ⁴⁷ Meanwhile the Christian Churches have been asleep, as usual, or intervened too late and "life punishes latecomers". ⁴⁸ Close to entire generations grow up godless and without orientation, without moral standards and thus decline. ⁴⁹ Barely had the aftermath of the French Revolution faded away in the fourth generation, the foundations are laid for the doom of generations to come. ⁵⁰ This time the Churches' silence and inaction makes them the perpetrators instead of the victims.

⁵¹ Although Pope John had tried to modernise the Church by convening a council, the Church was then too concerned with itself and clerical reforms that it was blind to the true problems of mankind and especially those of the younger generation. ⁵² The non-Catholic Christians, like Martin Luther King for instance, became active and started to fight for freedom and against the debasement of modern-day pariahs. ⁵³ King was assassinated but his death did more good than the centuries-old theorising and lamenting by theologians and philosophers. ⁵⁴ John F. Kennedy was also in somebody's way; it was obscured if his murder was caused by his

Catholicism or his enthusiasm for reforms or simply by “The World’s” political agenda.

⁵⁵ A cultural revolution erupted in communist China which aimed to destroy all time-honoured traditions and was characterised by murder and violence. ⁵⁶ This happened right on cue for the western world. ⁵⁷ Now it could point its finger at the Chinese in order to divert attention from itself seeing that it did exactly the same since the student revolts in Paris! ⁵⁸ The most remarkable event in the Muslim world is the proclamation of the Islamic Republic in Iran. ⁵⁹ After his return to Teheran the Ayatollah Khomeini changed the face of Shiite Islam and – what upset the West even more – the balance of the Asian powers.

⁶⁰ Let us now do justice to the opening verse of the psalmist. ⁶¹ The rulers of the world returned a fraction of the land to the Jews which had been intended for them by the Creator. ⁶² Now they are hypocritically indignant over the division of Berlin and the building of the wall although they did exactly the same in Jerusalem by assigning one part to the Jews and the other to the Kingdom of Jordan. ⁶³ But the events of the day dictated a different history than that envisaged by the mighty of the world. ⁶⁴ During the Six-Day War Israel conquered the Jewish heartland and returned the city of Jerusalem to Jewish rule. ⁶⁵ For the Jews this was like a return to the times of King David.

⁶⁶ When the stance of the Catholic Church towards the Jews and the Muslims under Pope John became more balanced, the Jews could heave a sigh of relief again, at least in Catholic regions. ⁶⁷ This pope canonised two important persons amongst others: Maximilian Kolbe and Edith Stein. ⁶⁸ Maximilian Kolbe is a shining example of unconditional love and a spiritual life; a memento to the current egotistical, “self-actualising” generation. ⁶⁹ As a monk he voluntarily and consciously sacrificed his own life to die of starvation in a concentration camp instead of a family father. ⁷⁰ Edith Stein, a Catholic nun, who had never ceased to be Jewish, also lost her life in a concentration camp. ⁷¹ She can be regarded as a kind of bridge between Jews and Christians as her person united both types of worship of the One God. ⁷² She died to reconcile the irreconcilable and left love and light where hatred and murder reigned.

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 6

1 He sent redemption onto His people, He hath commanded His covenant forever; holy and reverend is His name. 2 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.

3 When viewing the current world the observer is initially captivated by its best side. 4 People are better off than ever before. 5 There is a surplus of everything, be it food or other material or spiritual goods. 6 Life expectancy is longer than it was in the past; infant mortality is lower than ever. 7 For quite some time now knowledge has no longer be confined to an elite; thanks to the Internet any kind of information is instantly accessible. 8 Through the broad educational spectrum available to any age group people become enlightened and confident. 9 Physical labour is carried out by machines; working times are flexible, leisure periods are continually increasing. 10 Thanks to state pensions, health and nursing care insurance, senior citizens enjoy a pleasant retirement. 11 Slavery and any type of oppression are illegal; minorities have the same rights as the majority of the population. 12 The government's various organisations fight against human and drug trafficking, child labour, paedophilia etc. 13 The major powers negotiate the reduction of chemical weapons and environmentally harmful and health damaging chemical substances in agriculture, industry and medicine. 14 People want to preserve the planet and worry about nuclear power plants and atomic weapons. 15 Alternative energy sources are increasingly utilised. 16 Animal welfare regulations ensure proper living conditions for cattle. 17 Animal rights groups try to prevent the extinction of threatened species. 18 Several regulations are aimed to preserve plant diversity. 19 Quite a number of national and private aid agencies assist the poor in the Third World. 20 As such, although the world is still in need of improvement, everything is moving in the right direction; this viewpoint particularly prevails in western government circles and powerful political lobbies.

21 Let us now take a look at the other side of the coin. 22 The right to life from the moment of conception to natural death is no longer guaranteed. 23 Babies in the womb may be legally killed. 24 The advocates of abortion found powerful lobbies; it is doubtful if they are aware that they are only lucky enough to be alive because their mothers did not abort them. 25 Physical integrity is merely warranted on paper; in reality pharmaceutical products are tested on human being, organs are removed without consent; tests are conducted on embryos. 26 Public educational institutions teach children values which their parents consider to be immoral, obscene, even morbid. 27 Parents who disagree are deprived of their parental rights and their children are taken into custody. 28 Disgraceful lies are no longer prosecuted by law. 29 This has opened the doors to malicious slander and

defamation. ³⁰ The media exploit this mercilessly in order to disparage disagreeable persons, render them silent and rob them of their standing, dignity and freedom of action. ³¹ This is called freedom of the press and freedom of speech. ³² In the process their lobbyists declare any opinion directed against themselves as incitement to hatred and have their critics legally pursued. ³³ In this way the concept of verbal injury, notorious through communism, has been integrated into the “free democratic” society. ³⁴ Even worse: what was dealt with by the Inquisition and by Goebbels’ propaganda machine is now carried out by the mainstream media. ³⁵ Lies and libel in the media and politics know no boundaries. ³⁶ And the Christians amongst the perpetrators are not one bit better than them.

³⁷ The population of Eastern Europe had to pay for its freedom of movement with the dependency on the new value system based on lies and deception. ³⁸ Under the veil of democratisation, tax exemption and the freedom to travel neo-colonialism is smuggled in through the backdoor. ³⁹ Those who do not conform are punished. ⁴⁰ In Africa and Asia the peace-loving West has incited a number of wars: in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan...

⁴¹ The height of irony is that the arms used to wage these wars have been sold by those who publicly advocate peace. ⁴² And such “peacemakers” are even honoured with a Nobel Prize for their “merits”. ⁴³ Christianity and Judaism have been relegated to their respective ideological niches to preserve the impression of pluralism. ⁴⁴ But Islam, or at least its majority, does not accept a niche existence. ⁴⁵ For that reason “The World’s strategists” have declared war on Islam in general. ⁴⁶ The Islamophobes’ magic word is “fundamentalism”, the mainstream media’s ploy to inspire fear in its naïve audience. ⁴⁷ Refugees from Asia and Africa divide politics and people in the West. ⁴⁸ It has apparently been forgotten that they are in reality the result of the “peace-loving” western policies and their role in the “Arab Spring”.

⁴⁹ All these observations lead some people to firmly believe that the world is governed by “The World” which attempts to reverse all the LORD’S laws, rules and commandments. ⁵⁰ In order to save what can still be saved they try to organise themselves and speak out. ⁵¹ Most people on the planet, however, remain silent and wait. ⁵² Are they afraid to voice their opinion or perhaps not even have an opinion? ⁵³ They have possibly abandoned hope! ⁵⁴ All of those we would like to tell: “Do not be afraid!” ⁵⁵ God is the ruler of the earth since the beginning of time and will be for all eternity. ⁵⁶ And with the little ones he will defeat the big ones; with the low ones he will push the mighty ones from their thrones. ⁵⁷ Many pious

and humble believers who are deeply committed to God still exist in all three religions. ⁵⁸ Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Safed, Guadeloupe, Taizé, Medjugorje and many other places on the globe represent places of hope. ⁵⁹ People pray, make offerings, entrust their lives and their futures to the hands of the Creator. ⁶⁰ Prayer groups and circles mushroomed everywhere; here people also pray, fast and reflect on the Holy Scriptures.

⁶¹ Prayer and fasting are the strongest “weapons” on this planet. ⁶² They do not earn one a Nobel Prize and public recognition, but peace of mind and a life in the presence of God. ⁶³ Subsequently one learns to love and help all human beings, including those who have different ideas or conscribe to another faith. ⁶⁴ Hundreds of thousands of voluntary aid workers spread a fresh feeling of altruism and solidarity. ⁶⁵ More and more devout Jews, Muslims and Christians become friends. ⁶⁶ Many Christians and Muslims realise that all of Eretz Israel should belong to the Jews – not because this is what the Jews want, but because God has decreed it. ⁶⁷ More and more Jews also comprehend that Israel has to change its policies against the Muslims and modify them in accordance with the Torah: *But the stranger who dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.* ⁶⁸ A large number of Jews, although they do not acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, do recognise him as an extremely wise Jewish rabbi. ⁶⁹ Western Christians also gradually acknowledge Islam to be a religion of true and absolute devotion to God. ⁷⁰ All this and much more are signs that should make us look confidently and optimistically towards the future as God is already secretly creating the world’s “tomorrow” through all his anonymous servants. ⁷¹ He also calls on you to participate in the realisation of His plan. ⁷² If you so desire, He will reveal His plan to you and you shall contribute your valuable and unique part in His scheme.

GOD’S CALL

I

¹ When the LORD created the Garden of Eden and mankind, he liked them both: mankind and the garden. ² Through their disobedience Adam and Eva proved themselves unworthy and were sent away. ³ Secretly, however, the garden still exists and the LORD pays particular attention to three plants. ⁴ The first of these is the lily, the second the rose, the third the olive. ⁵ Since man has lost his knowledge through disobedience, the Garden of Eden is hidden and heaven closed to his heart. ⁶ The LORD rued the calamity and

man's forsakenness and He decided to try nurturing and cultivating him again just as he did when caring for his three plants.

⁷ Like a lily in the desert – graceful among billions of grains of sand - that is how enchanting and sweet Israel is amongst the peoples. ⁸ The LORD once planted the seed, the lily's root in the land of Canaan. ⁹ The blossoms wither, the stems vanish, but the root remains and keeps producing shoots even millennia later. ¹⁰ Through its beauty the lily spreads the knowledge about her creator, the LORD of the Universe, the ruler of life and death. ¹¹ Her grace beguiled the peoples; enticed them to search for God, Israel's Father. ¹² Traces of their origin, the lost Garden of Eden, of being, of meaning, traces of the Torah, of the fellow man, of nature, of one's own heart. ¹² Like dew the Torah settles in the peoples' remembrance, God's revelation to Israel as His message to all mankind. ¹⁴ With their laws and regulations – written into their hearts with bloody letters – the Israelites, like a preamble of a yet to be composed global constitution, represent a better world; the return to the Garden of Eden.

¹⁵ Once the tidings of God's People reached all peoples and the lily had fulfilled its task, it was followed by the more robust and resilient rose. ¹⁶ Like a personal greeting of the Highest to each and every man and woman, the rose blossom is an invitation to meet the LORD. ¹⁷ At times white like innocence, at times pink like comfort, at times red like love. ¹⁸ Sometimes a delight for the eyes, sometimes fragrant, sometimes prickly. ¹⁹ The rose – it is Jesus of Nazareth and his message. ²⁰ All those who heed his words about the right way to live will easily take their place in the Kingdom of Heaven. ²¹ Everyone who accepts Jesus and follows his advice is worthy to personally experience the LORD and enter the Garden of Eden.

²² And then there is the olive. ²³ It spreads its branches over the lily and the rose and bears rich fruit and excellent oil as anointment for the whole world. ²⁴ The olive sums up the knowledge of God and the laws of Israel, of the lily and the guidelines for righteous living and of the rose in an instruction for all nations. ²⁵ The beauty of the lily and the fragrance of the rose lead to the olive's fruitfulness. ²⁶ Beneath its branches the lily and the rose are safe and protected. ²⁷ Thus it was planned; thus it is being implemented. ²⁸ But man's inadequacy slowed down the plan. ²⁹ Lily, rose and olive, representatives before the LORD of the Israelites, Christians and Muslims. ³⁰ Three plants

from the one garden; three religions of the one God. ³¹ Three books of the one faith: the Torah, the Gospels, the Koran.

³² The LORD sees things differently to the way man does. ³³ Man perceives catastrophes, calamities, epidemics and others' wrongdoings. ³⁴ He interprets all these as punishment; as retribution for the misdeeds of those who do not live and believe in his ways. ³⁵ But the LORD looks mainly at the heart; at that which is hidden in man. ³⁶ At man's behaviour towards his neighbour, his deeds in the community, his inner longings, his strengths, weaknesses and joys. ³⁷ Man ascribes evil like catastrophes and ill strokes of fate to the LORD, but not wellbeing, happiness and joy. ³⁸ Everything beautiful, everything pleasant that comes from the LORD, he takes for granted. ³⁹ And yet he forgets that every difficulty the LORD sends his way serves nothing but his conversion, edification and growth.

⁴⁰ Man behaves in two ways that sadden the LORD. ⁴¹ For that reason the LORD hides and withdraws. ⁴² He does this when humans only come to him because they are forced by their rules to do so, because they need something or they are experiencing hardship. ⁴³ But they forget Him when they are well, when they are happy, singing, dancing and enjoying life. ⁴⁴ And yet He would love to share their joy. ⁴⁵ Will they even pay Him any attention in paradise as they are surrounded by happiness and bliss or will only the unfortunate souls in hell reach out to Him? ⁴⁶ The LORD also hides because of all the scientists, theologians and philosophers. ⁴⁷ What would they possibly think about the LORD and the world were they ever to know his secrets and the secrets about the creation of the world? ⁴⁸ Any old fairy tale contains more truth about the LORD and the world than all the scientific formulas and theories, philosophical schools of thought and theological treatises. ⁴⁹ The LORD reveals all he conceals from the scholars and educated to the little people and those without a voice. ⁵⁰ Lowliness, humility, simplicity and a sincere heart contain all the knowledge man requires to be happy, now and for eternity. ⁵¹ Through incessant research to discover the LORD'S secrets, through celebrating without the LORD the heart hardens, the mind becomes haughty and the person blinded. ⁵² These are man's gravest errors since being banished from the Garden of Eden and at the same time the biggest obstacles barring his return to it.

⁵³ Therefore the lily, the rose and the olive are pointing the way to the Garden of Eden, to paradise. ⁵⁴ But now they have also run to seed and need to be

pruned, renewed and pointed in the original direction. ⁵⁵ This is the reason for this book. ⁵⁶ To point out mistakes and issue new instructions. ⁵⁷ Let us address you first, the people of Israel from the House of Jacob. ⁵⁸ Despite all your sins, transgressions and disloyalty the LORD has not and will not desert you as you are his personal property. ⁵⁹ Although you often believed and believe to this day that the LORD shuns you. ⁶⁰ At least some of your shepherds and leaders believe this to be the case. ⁶¹ They therefore took your fate into their own hands and recorded what should never have been recorded. ⁶² The LORD had trust and wanted some events to be only orally passed from generation to generation, yet Israel's teachers "knew better" and thus the written word lost its power of instruction and correct interpretation. ⁶³ The scholars themselves sensed this to be the case and kept trying to rectify the situation by writing ever new tales and rules, thereby creating a Torah around the Torah. ⁶⁴ This confused mankind more and more, leading to a schism and unity was lost. ⁶⁵ It tried to direct the destiny of God's people itself. ⁶⁶ The leaders became increasingly independent, inventive and insolent and disregarded the prophets' warnings, the advice of the pious. ⁶⁷ In their learnedness they eventually imagined to know and own God's final word. ⁶⁸ They took the LORD'S place in the House of Jacob. ⁶⁹ Thus they laid the foundation for their struggles and much of Israel's suffering.

⁷⁰ The followers of Christianity, which the LORD founded out of Judaism through Jesus of Nazareth, initially proved their love and loyalty even at the price of persecution and death. ⁷¹ As long as they remained as their neighbours' and the LORD'S humble servants, they were kind, altruistic and modest – like a crimson rose. ⁷² Until amongst them, too, the shepherds emerged as they thought it to be impossible to lead a flock without firm control. ⁷³ So they also started to segregate themselves and put up walls; first to exclude the Jews who did not believe in Jesus, later also against all those to whom they should be proclaiming God's word through their own life and example. ⁷⁴ The LORD was touched by the Christians' suffering and testimony and he gave them a well-meaning ruler from a pagan background. ⁷⁵ Instead of rejoicing and continuing to follow Jesus of Nazareth's principles, their leaders immediately grasped the opportunity to partake in the power. ⁷⁶ And just like the Jewish leaders before them, they now also took the LORD'S place amongst the believers. ⁷⁷ First they renounced Christianity's Jewish foundation, then they disposed of their Jewish brothers. ⁷⁸ They suppressed the fact that the LORD said to Moses and the Pharaoh: *Israel is my son, even my firstborn!* ⁷⁹ From here it took only a small step until

Christendom proclaimed itself as the new chosen people and put the Jews down as corrupt. ⁸⁰ The proponents of power and dominance among the Christian scholars and leaders became increasingly strong while the vast majority of ordinary people held onto the values of service and love. ⁸¹ In order to impose their rule as the LORD'S representative on them as well, the scholars and leaders conceived more and more new doctrines, theological sophistries and decreed ever new rules of conduct. ⁸² When the believers did not accept those, they were punished, exiled or excluded from the community. ⁸³ And again like the Jewish shepherds before them, the Christian succeeded to obscure the light of faith and to falsify the guidelines for righteous living.

⁸⁴ When the LORD then began to fulfil His promise to Hagar and created the Muslims as a fertile olive tree, the next phase of his plan was ushered in and thus also the trembling of Jewish and Christian leaders. ⁸⁵ The whole world was to know the LORD, all the countries of the earth – except Israel – were to follow the rules of the Koran. ⁸⁶ The beginning was promising, as Islam rapidly spread with the LORD'S help. ⁸⁷ But here, too, difficulties soon arose. ⁸⁸ After the Prophet's death the leading personalities fell out with each other and some of the shepherds turned into savage wolves. ⁸⁹ The interpretation of the Koran became obscured, resulting in misconstruction and schisms. ⁹⁰ Despite all this, the LORD continued to help with the spreading of Islam. ⁹¹ But once the Islamic leaders and shepherds started to advance their own advantages, their power, conquered territories and riches and tormented Jews and Christians, he withdrew his help. ⁹² Instead of reflecting and returning to the fundamentals, the Islamic leaders wreaked havoc right across the world and used the Koran as a weapon; not as the holy remedy as which it had been intended. ⁹³ A weapon with which all those of Allah's children were murdered who did not correspond to their ideas, be it Jews, Christians, pagans or even fellow Muslims.

⁹⁴ Now all three plants, the olive, the rose and the lily, have run to seed and become estranged from themselves and the LORD. ⁹⁵ It is high time for a return, for reconciliation, for ennoblement! ⁹⁶ For this reason this guidance, this book, was created. ⁹⁷ It is no more and no less than a last chance for all three to find the gates to the Garden of Eden again.

II

⁹⁸ Of the three faiths, the Israelites have been the least guilty over the course of history. ⁹⁹ They have committed the least atrocities, but suffered the most.

¹⁰⁰ And yet their obstinacy and uncircumcised hearts made them miss two decisive moments. ¹⁰¹ The first was the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰² He performed numerous miracles and spoke with authority – during his lifetime Israel experienced relative peace; the Temple stood in all its glory. ¹⁰³ Therefore the spiritual and secular leaders of the Jews feared that he could really be the Messiah. ¹⁰⁴ Because from the Messiah they expected to be led to victory over all their enemies, but Jesus preached of the victory of every man and woman over his- or herself. ¹⁰⁵ For these leaders, accustomed as they were to luxury, esteem and respect as well as secular politics, it was a nightmare. ¹⁰⁶ This was sufficient reason to declare Jesus to be a worse enemy than the Romans. ¹⁰⁷ Now something similar happened to them as had happened to the Pharaoh when Moses stood before him and asked him to let his people go so they may serve their God. ¹⁰⁸ His heart hardened so much that all the firstborn had to be killed before the Israelites could be released from slavery. ¹⁰⁹ As a result of the Israelites' disobedience and lack of faith, Moses had to die without reaching the Promised Land. ¹¹⁰ Jesus, too, had to die without seeing the Jews' inner conversion. ¹¹¹ When numerous pagans also started to believe in God through Jesus' message, this provided the Jewish leaders with another reason to reject his teachings and curse its followers, in particular as some of the followers regarded Jesus as a manifestation of God. ¹¹² This was the beginning of millennia of suffering on both sides. ¹¹³ Here is a question for today's Jewish leaders. ¹¹⁴ You are all familiar with the passage of the Torah where God says to Moses: *See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.* ¹¹⁵ How much more positive and happier the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land would have been had the Pharaoh respected Moses like God. ¹¹⁶ Wouldn't it have changed the course of history to this day? ¹¹⁷ So why does it bother you that the Gentiles today respect the Jew Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God and gain knowledge of the Torah and your LORD through him? ¹¹⁸ Instead of cursing them each of you should personally heed his teachings without neglecting your duty to the Torah. ¹¹⁹ You have to reinvoke those Jews who became Christians and were therefore banned by your elders back into your Jewish community. ¹²⁰ As a people you have to keep following the Torah, but as individuals in your private lives you have to try living by Jesus' teachings to open the gate to the Garden of Eden.

¹²¹ The second decisive moment when you missed doing the right thing was when the LORD started to fulfil His promise to Hagar for the Ishmaelite's. ¹²² You did not believe the Prophet whom he had chosen from amongst your

brothers. ¹²³ On the contrary, you laughed him and mocked him. ¹²⁴ In your arrogant learnedness you misinterpreted his simplicity, yet it was he who was intended as protection against those Christians who had become ferocious. ¹²⁵ It was an offer God made to you, but you rejected it and your eloquence and knowledge made you a danger that threatened to destroy the delicate plant of Islam. ¹²⁶ For that reason the LORD himself helped the Prophet and his followers and you suffered the consequences. ¹²⁷ The Ishmaelite's are your blood relatives; the Muslims are your brothers in faith. ¹²⁸ You have to respect them as such and regard and treat them as people who belong to the same God. ¹²⁹ You were given the Torah to follow its teachings and for the whole world to recognise the LORD through you and your writings. ¹³⁰ They were given the Koran to follow, but also so that its laws are applied in all the countries of the world. ¹³¹ In the sense of submission you are Muslims yourselves, the first, chosen long before Muhammad. ¹³² You have to recognise him as a prophet even though he was not sent to you and was not given rules and regulations for you but for your Ishmaelite brothers and the rest of the world. ¹³³ Through your obstinacy you misjudged both Jesus and Muhammad – as Moses lamented about you: *Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.* ¹³⁴ Only because you are the first, because the LORD has chosen and raised you, do you have a unique, privileged status in the world, with your own country, your own rules and your own laws.

¹³⁵ And now God has an assignment for you. ¹³⁶ From the Tanakh you should have long realised – and if you did not, the LORD tells you now – that the time of animal sacrifices was limited from the start and has long since expired. ¹³⁷ Because you didn't take this seriously, the Temple has been denied you to this day. ¹³⁸ But now you have to realise the fact and build the Temple the way the LORD has foretold you through the Prophet: *For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.* ¹³⁹ But before you do this you have to change your legislation. ¹⁴⁰ Do you remember that Abram gave the priest of the Highest God a tenth of everything? ¹⁴¹ This is how you have to make your offerings: everything that had been stipulated to you as animal, crop or other sacrifices you have to convert into time and money. ¹⁴² First of all it is important to sacrifice a tenth of your time. ¹⁴³ For every kind of sacrifice you must calculate the corresponding money value which enables you to sacrifice to the LORD to the same extent as your forefathers once did with animal and grain offerings.

¹⁴⁴ Spiritual leaders, rabbis and representatives of devout Jews – from all creeds and from all countries – must form a committee of 720 members, proportionally from all congregations. ¹⁴⁵ These 720 representatives must meet in Jerusalem at the Shavuot, correctly celebrate the feast days and then cast lots to determine 72 people among them to calculate the implementation of the money and time sacrifices. ¹⁴⁶ As you are a very versatile people in matter likes this you Jews must determine the choice, proportional representation and mission of the 720 representatives as well as how to draw lots to determine the 72 representatives with minimum delay. ¹⁴⁷ These 72 representative must examine all the associated rules regarding their current feasibility while constantly bearing in mind how to improve mankind's lot without reversing the commandments. ¹⁴⁸ This specifically refers to the many rabbinical rules which were composed to protect the commandments of the Torah. ¹⁴⁹ The aim is to ease any required action, make life more beautiful and bring the people closer to God. ¹⁵⁰ Everything this committee decides after consultation is to form a valid part of the Torah as it was done on behalf of the LORD. ¹⁵¹ From then on all Israelites will have no more excuses not to fulfil all commandments. ¹⁵² After all the decisions have been written down, they must be added to the Tanakh. ¹⁵³ Like the Israelites once died in the desert and only their descendants reached the Promised Land, so all the old laws must now be replaced by new ones to give meaning and purpose to the new Temple.

¹⁵⁴ Then you must commence the building of the Temple. ¹⁵⁵ Namely on the square in front of the wall you now use to pray and lament. ¹⁵⁶ The Temple is to have the shape and colours of an upright lily in bloom. ¹⁵⁷ Thus it will represent Israel and no holy Muslim or Christian sites have to be destroyed. ¹⁵⁸ The temple must be build from the best currently available materials and to the most up-to-date architectural, technical and aesthetic specifications. ¹⁵⁹ All those involved in the planning and construction must be practising, devout Jews. ¹⁶⁰ The stairs and lifts leading to the “chalice” must be in the lily’s “stem”. ¹⁶¹ Wet rooms and ritual washrooms as well as rooms for the security and cleaning staff and all other required auxiliary rooms are to be build on the ground level around the “stem”. ¹⁶² The room containing the holiest of the holy is to be in the middle of the chalice. ¹⁶³ A table with the Ark of the Covenant is to be positioned in the centre of this room. ¹⁶⁴ The Ark of the Covenant must include three smaller compartments made of gold. ¹⁶⁵ In the middle one the hand-written Torah scroll must be sealed; the other two are two contain the four hand-written Gospels and the hand-written Koran

respectively. ¹⁶⁶ The Torah in the Hebrew language, the Gospels in Greek and the Koran in Arabic. ¹⁶⁷ This room must remain locked and be surrounded by a large prayer room which must also be suitable for practising the liturgical rites of individual religions. ¹⁶⁸ It is to be divided in such a way that Jews, Christians and Muslims can pray undisturbed divided from each other. ¹⁶⁹ All other details regarding the Temple, its decoration, laws and use are to be decided by the committee of 72 which also determines the modified sacrifice laws as well as the manner of its own continued existence. ¹⁷⁰ The Temple is to be the Jews' central religious homestead and property; Christians and Muslims must always be allowed its use as visitors and guests. ¹⁷¹ The height of the Temple has to approximately correspond to the neighbouring "Dome above the Rock" to fulfil the prophetic words: *His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.* ¹⁷² Once the building of the Temple is complete, the Jews shall once more fulfil all commandments, rules and laws of the Torah as stipulated by the 72 authorities in the name of the LORD. ¹⁷³ From then on all devout Israelites from the diaspora are obliged to visit Jerusalem once a year as soon as their finances and health permit to fulfil all or part of the mandatory sacrifices in the Temple; the Jews living in Israel, however, must make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year.

III

¹⁷⁴ Let us now address you, the Christians. ¹⁷⁵ You have chosen Jesus as your Saviour and Redeemer. ¹⁷⁶ He was a Jew who lived according to Jewish traditions. ¹⁷⁷ Through him the knowledge of the true LORD and the righteous way of living was to be brought to every person on earth. ¹⁷⁸ He founded neither a religion nor a nation. ¹⁷⁹ His congregation, his community of disciples was only a seed from which the knowledge of the true LORD – only known by the Jews until then – sprouted. ¹⁸⁰ His disciples and their descendants were meant to always live in a way that others embraced their example and thus got to know and love the Creator of the World. ¹⁸¹ They were to spread the Gospel of the LORD'S love for his Jewish people and all the peoples of the earth. ¹⁸² But as soon as Jesus had left his disciples they, instead of spreading it, began to define the Gospels' teachings, to isolate them, then isolate themselves and finally to exclude all other Jews. ¹⁸³ This unavoidably led to strive for earthly power, for victory, to evangelisation through force. ¹⁸⁴ Once they had succeeded, yes, then at the latest, the lost

their connection to the origin, the foundation, the roots. ¹⁸⁵ With devastating consequences for the Jews, the Christians themselves and the whole world. ¹⁸⁶ They founded “Christian” empires, states and countries; there were “Christian” emperors, kings and presidents – all rulers and potentates. ¹⁸⁷ The teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they called Christ, were submerged, forgotten or falsified. ¹⁸⁸ To this very day they do not comprehend that one cannot found and govern a city, a province, a country based on the foundation of Jesus’ teachings and the Christian way of life as this would be a contradiction in itself.

¹⁸⁹ Ever since Noah, the LORD demands of peoples and communities to observe rules and laws in order to punish evil and to prevent it from spreading so that communities can function. ¹⁹⁰ The Torah, which was specifically given to the Jewish people, is the best example for this. ¹⁹¹ Jesus, however, taught very different principles, without reference to hierarchies and the fight about rights. ¹⁹² He proclaimed the LORD’S love for every person and issued guidelines based on the Torah as to how the individual should live to attain happiness and salvation after fulfilling his civic duties. ¹⁹³ *Who am I to sit in judgement over you brothers, over your property?* ¹⁹⁴ *You shall cut out your eye, chop off your hand – as a precaution – so you shall not sin.* ¹⁹⁵ *If somebody takes your coat, also give him the shirt on your back.* ¹⁹⁶ *If you want to be big you have to be the smallest and serve others.* ¹⁹⁷ How could a country (except the Garden of Eden) ever function based on those principles unless it were populated by the blind, the disabled and ministers, presidents and emperors parading as geriatric and general nurses!? ¹⁹⁸ Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s, that is what Jesus meant. ¹⁹⁹ You should obey the laws of the ruler, as the Jews do in all countries, and serve the LORD with what is yours: your soul and your heart. ²⁰⁰ But you created powerful empires, wealthy Churches, laws, ostentation and exploitation; a hundred camels could more easily fit through the eye of the needle than a Garden of Eden or a fair world could develop from your empires.

²⁰¹ You ridiculed Muhammad, despised the Muslims, fought them and regarded them as the spawn of Satan. ²⁰² And you never once asked yourself how this “Realm of the Devil” could spread so quickly and extensively despite your “Holiness” your “Holy Empires” and despite your “Holy Apostolic Majesties”. ²⁰³ But the worst is the fact that you partly corrupted the Muslims through your example and seduced them into pomp, power, riches, plunder

and the “representation of God” on earth. ²⁰⁴ At war with each other, exploiting and degrading others, that is how you have lived for centuries.

²⁰⁵ Therefore the LORD has a mission for all those of you who call themselves Christians. ²⁰⁶ First you have to make peace with each other without regard to and without negotiation of your respective doctrine, interpretation, authority or size. ²⁰⁷ Secondly everyone has to recognise Muhammad as the LORD’S Prophet and the Muslims as equal believers. ²⁰⁸ See yourselves as members of the great Jewish and Muslim family of faith. ²⁰⁹ You are to add the Koran to the Bible after the last book of the New Testament. ²¹⁰ You are to add the Talmud – the Babylonian as well as the Jerusalem version – and the Hadith collection as an appendix to the Bible and make them accessible to all believers. ²¹¹ Use all your moral authority and every possible prayer to ensure that the Jews will get the whole of Israel as their state as it is the will of God. ²¹² Endeavour to obtain permission to establish a communal Christian centre in Jerusalem, be it under the leadership of an individual or a collective. ²¹³ You have to recognise the Jews as the highest authority in the interpretation of the Old Testament. ²¹⁴ You have to transfer all valuables, treasures and collections individual denominations have amassed and not yet distributed to the poor and needy to the Jewish people or state respectively as a small compensation for centuries of being murdered, plundered and tormented. ²¹⁵ You have to concede the civil jurisdiction which is still in Christian hands to the Muslims and obligate the Christians to submit to Islamic law in all matters except those pertaining to religious practice as each of the three religions has its own legislation. ²¹⁶ Every Christian who lives by Jesus’ principles can become a Jew or a Muslim without ceasing to be a Christian.

IV

²¹⁷ Let us now address the Muslims. ²¹⁸ When the LORD found the humble Muhammad to be a man after his own heart, it was a new beginning for mankind. ²¹⁹ Through the Koran the LORD wanted to pass several messages to mankind. ²²⁰ He confirmed the Torah and the Gospels as well as the correctness in believing in the one True God. ²²¹ He admonished the proprietors of the Torah and the Gospels because of their hard-heartedness and their non-compliance with his commandments. ²²² He revealed legal regulations for all countries of the earth without regard to the individual’s religion. ²²³ He gave those who had the grace to become Muslims a mission which nobody had been able to fulfil until then: the Holy War. ²²⁴ He was

revealed to the prophet under the name of Allah. ²²⁵ At the same time He obscured his essence and his characteristics even more through the Koran and thus completely deprived the philosophers, theologians and scientists of discovering the origins. ²²⁶ Through the Koran He created a kind of confusion nobody can unravel, so that nobody can get close to His secrets. ²²⁷ He did this so man would finally stop to occupy himself with the LORD'S essence, his secrets and start to fulfil his commandments, to love his neighbour and spread the LORD'S word instead. ²²⁸ With Allah's help the Prophet began to found the first congregations, to proclaim his message and was met with resistance and enmity by the Arabs, Jews and Christians. ²²⁹ His congregation was small, pious, devoted to the LORD but in danger of being extinguished. ²³⁰ But the LORD does not desert his children! ²³¹ With Allah's help they achieved numerous victories, grew, became strong and spread God's message ever further throughout the world. ²³² But this time, too, as so often, Satan was allowed to test the people to find out if they were really concerned with devotion to the LORD, the proclamation of his word and expanding Allah's kingdom or only with discovering God's secrets, their own authority and increasing their sphere of influence. ²³³ And as so frequently in history the Muslims also succumbed more and more to Satan's temptations and to the ways of the world.

²³⁴ Over the course of the centuries the leaders of various Islamic orientations, through their debauched lifestyle, inner conflicts and fights, murderous plunder and war, turned Islam into a nightmare for the people and the Koran into a book of shock and horror. ²³⁵ The Holy War they were to fight to win the whole world over to Allah has become a never-ending blood bath with atrocities surpassing anything that ever happened. ²³⁶ Instead of waging the Holy War against themselves to eradicate their own weaknesses and thus attain total devotion to Allah, instead of improving the circumstances within their own area of government to facilitate a lifestyle that pleases God for the people and to prevent poverty, they preferred conquering, sacking and murdering and, what's more, under the pretext that this was Allah's will. ²³⁷ In this way they failed the LORD'S mission even worse than the Christians did before them. ²³⁸ Devotion to the LORD and a religion of peace has turned into a violent movement. ²³⁹ But the Lord does not give up; he knows that the Muslims thanks to millions of simple, exemplary, peaceful and pious believers have the strength to get back up and once more become a guide to all peoples.

²⁴⁰ This is Allah's assignment for you, the Muslims! ²⁴¹ First you must stop concerning yourself with the matter if Jews and Christians believe and live correctly. ²⁴² Allah alone is in charge of their faith and their lives. ²⁴³ You must ensure that the Holy War is fought inside Islam; not with swords and weapons, but solely through love and self-improvement. ²⁴⁴ You have to eliminate the excesses amongst you, have to stop philosophising and theologising; instead you have to start praying fervently and most of all to pay the poor-rate fully and correctly. ²⁴⁵ First make peace with each other, then with the Jews and Christians, and bring Islam and Islamic law to all the peoples of the earth. ²⁴⁶ Your shepherds from all Islamic orientations have to meet and select and compile parts of the Sharia for the non-Muslims so it can serve as civic jurisdiction all over the world. ²⁴⁷ If you do this through violence and at your own discretion, you will not succeed but be destroyed. ²⁴⁸ If you do this through good example and with conviction as well as fasting and prayer, Allah will be by your side and no country will be able to resist you.

²⁴⁹ You must accept and love the Jews as your brothers, help them to enter the Promised Land and live there with them in harmony. ²⁵⁰ Without the Jews there would be no Torah; without the Torah there would be no Koran and without the Koran no Islam – will you ever understand that! ²⁵¹ Do not be disturbed by the Christians and their worship of Jesus as the Son of God. ²⁵² If Allah permitted this, then it serves a certain purpose. ²⁵³ There are clear references in the Koran for you to understand this, amongst others: *O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessings upon you and your mother. I supported you with the Holy Spirit, to enable you to speak to the people from the crib, as well as an adult. I taught you the scripture, wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel. Recall that you created from clay the shape of a bird by My leave, then blew into it, and it became a live bird by My leave...* ²⁵⁴ Who should the Christians have Jesus believed to be when he breathed life into a being of clay the way Allah did when He created the world? ²⁵⁵ Was it not natural to believe him to be the Son of God as Allah had never in history allowed somebody to do something like this? ²⁵⁶ Besides, it is not your task to judge somebody who had the scripture before you; instead concern yourself with your own lives and deeds. ²⁵⁷ But to achieve this, your life as a Muslim must be in perfect harmony with God's will and you have to remind and help other Muslim brothers to do the same.

²⁵⁸ Those Muslims who have become Christians have to continue being Muslims and fulfil all the associated duties. ²⁵⁹ His belief in Jesus is a private

matter which gives him the strength, hope and wisdom to become a better Muslim. ²⁶⁰ The same applies to the Jew who has converted to Christianity.

V

²⁶¹ Hear you shepherds of the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims – thus speaks the LORD! ²⁶² Your faith is one and the same in three different ways; you must understand that you are more than brothers – you are my beloved children. ²⁶³ I do no longer want to see you at war with each other but united in the fight for life and the good in the world. ²⁶⁴ None of you must change your faith, but his attitude towards me. ²⁶⁵ Do you still not comprehend that I pay particular attention to how the individual lives his life? ²⁶⁶ If you are a lily, be as beautiful as a lily; if you are a rose, smell as fragrant as a rose; if you are an olive, bear plentiful fruit. ²⁶⁷ To please the LORD in this you were all given the same commandment: Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ²⁶⁸ The path is the same: prayer, study of the scriptures, fasting, confessing one's own weaknesses and sinfulness, helping the needy. ²⁶⁹ If you do this, you do the right thing; everything else is down to your freedom, comprehension and preference. ²⁷⁰ If you don't do this, you will not survive.

VI

²⁷¹ As long as the shepherds of the three religions do not do and fulfil what the LORD asks of them, here is some advice for you, the ordinary person, the devout Jew, humble Christian, modest Muslim. ²⁷² You do not have to wait for reconciliation “from above”; you can immediately begin to overcome your and your religious leaders' judgements and prejudices against the sister religions. ²⁷³ The LORD has a simple recipe for everything: love.

²⁷⁴ This is what the LORD says: At all times did I have people who elected and defined me, determined my wishes and served me to the best of their knowledge and conscience. ²⁷⁵ But I have always looked out for those who follow my call and serve me in the way I demand of them without asking for reasons and without enquiring into my essence, without wanting to win and rule with me. ²⁷⁶ Many strive to recognise me, to talk in my name, to discover my plans, to explore my characteristics and deeds, to become my representatives or custodians. ²⁷⁷ For this reason I have hidden behind the secrets of creation, the mysteriousness of the Holy Scriptures, the obscure revelations. ²⁷⁸ Yes, I myself wanted that nature remains mysterious, that the scriptures apparently contradict each other, that there are different paths to

me. ²⁷⁹ I have forbidden everyone to create images of God because as many billions of them exist as there are people in this world. ²⁸⁰ Those, too, who apparently observe the prohibition created numerous images of God through their theologians and philosophers and are not much better than those who do not shrink from “artistic” representation. ²⁸¹ Since Adam and Eve I have deprived mankind of any form of realisation and obscured the all-embracing recognition of good and evil. ²⁸² I did this because the conviction of possessing a realisation alone inevitably leads to the temptation of wanting to be “like God”.

VII

²⁸³ I therefore always look for simple, unassuming people who are willing to serve according to my rules, who do not want to be victorious and rule with me, but to love and work, even to lose and suffer if needs be. ²⁸⁴ If you think you are one of those, I call you to me – become my friend, my helper! ²⁸⁵ But to do this you have to fulfil the following conditions to understand my wishes.

²⁸⁶ First you must start praying from the heart. ²⁸⁷ This means you have to longingly search for me, ask for love, study the Holy Scriptures of all three religions, observe the religious duties of your religious community and in addition secretly dwell with me every day so that the time you spend in prayer is at least two and a half hours daily, i.e. a tenth of your time.

²⁸⁸ Secondly you must start fasting. ²⁸⁹ This means you must observe all days of fasting and abstinence your religious community prescribes and additionally fast for at least three days a month, ideally only taking bread and water.

²⁹⁰ Thirdly you must serve your neighbour with your money and time: the poor, the sick, the lonely, the incarcerated, the ones left behind, strangers, the disabled, the desperate. ²⁹¹ For this you should sacrifice a tenth of your time or your net income or both proportionately.

²⁹² Fourthly you must make a pilgrimage every year in addition to your usual religious duties. ²⁹³ This journey should last at least a day and at most 30 days; the destination can be any place of your choice. ²⁹⁴ It can be a holy site, the desert, a beautiful, remote place or – if you do not have sufficient time and money – the closest orchard or forest.

²⁹⁵ Furthermore you must explore your sinfulness and weaknesses, confess them and repent and act appropriately humble and modest. ²⁹⁶ You must confess to yourself, to God and your neighbour, and this every day and in the manner of your religious community. ²⁹⁷ You must bring your misfortune and your grief before God, but most of all you must celebrate your successes, your joys before and with the LORD. ²⁹⁸ You must live your life without reservation in the sight of God without hiding even when you sin. ²⁹⁹ If you do all this you will be my co-worker and reach the Garden of Eden already during your life on earth and experience far more knowledge and happiness than all the zealots, theologians and scholars of the world. ³⁰⁰ Amen

Part SEVEN

CHAPTER 7

¹ *Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD! Praise ye the LORD!*

² At the end of time the Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth will have the last word. ³ But before this takes place, behold, he has a mission for you! ⁴ May you now continue to write and complete the last chapter of the Holy Scriptures! ⁵ May you record the events of your days, emphasise the plan God has envisaged for you, describe your path with the LORD!

⁶ Without your contribution the Holy Scriptures make little sense to you as you are their completion. ⁷ And on the day when you shall finally enter the eternal Sabbath, the end of the world shall have commenced for you, the end of time; and the LORD will speak the last word for you!

⁸ ...

Statement by the person responsible

To forestall any enquiries and discussions, the following is declared:

This book was created at the behest of the LORD by human beings. All historical chapters of the chronicle are the work of man, on the one hand written through inspiration, on the other by human (lack of) knowledge. The text GOD'S CALL is the LORD'S summons expressed in human words. Lacking linguistic expressiveness, it may perhaps be inept in its phrasing, yet it is truthfully and authentically recounted. All other questions are redundant as only the LORD knows why, why now, why like this and no other way this is to be understood.

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