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SAFELY HOME

10th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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It cost him everything he had... but gained him everything that mattered.

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RANDY
ALCORN

Author of the best-selling book *Heaven*

epilogue

HOW LONG, O Lord?" the voices of millions cried out.

"Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," said the King. "I will rescue them."

The King stood in front of his throne. His eyes—and all those across the heavens—were fixed now on a young locksmith from Pushan, who languished in prison, dying of tuberculosis, coughing up blood. As Li Shen's life faded, the King gripped the hilt of the sword, then unsheathed it. He lifted it up, stretching out his arm. He whistled to a white stallion, a creature unlike any other. It flew to him, dancing and snorting, rising up on its back legs, eager to run to battle. The King, shining with the brilliance of a thousand quasars, mounted his great steed.

All heaven watched the young man breathe his last at the feet of his tormentors. At that moment the Warrior-King, eyes wet and white-hot, cried out with a voice that shook heaven and earth: "*No longer!*"

Michael threw his arm forward, the hosts of heaven shouted, and millions of horses gathered, mounted by warriors of every tribe, nation, and tongue. Eternity's door swung open on its hinges. Out of one realm and into another rode an army like there had never been.

"The time has come," roared the King. "Rescue my people! Destroy my enemies!" The Morning Star, who had once come as Lamb, now returned as Lion, with ten thousand galaxies forming the train of his imperial robe.

A mighty army appeared from the distant reaches of the cosmos, progressing across billions of stars and planets. Vast hordes of warriors moved past Orion's nebula in an explosion of colors. The army advanced toward earth in rumbling cadence. Without saddle or bridle, they rode great white Thoroughbreds, proud stallions that seemed to know their mission as well as they knew their riders. Some of the mounts pulled chariots of fire, streaking like meteors across the sky.

A legion of angels gathered in formation in back of and to the sides of the Commander. Not far behind him were twelve men and, following them, a great company of martyrs, warriors whose hands moved to the hilts of their swords, the fire of righteousness in their eyes exploding into infernos.

Among them rode a man of brilliance and burning intensity, mounted tall and proud upon a great horse. The warrior's name was Li Quan. Four more men named Li kept pace, two on each side of him, including one who had joined them but moments before. The newcomer, riding wide-eyed and trying to assimilate what had happened to him, began to understand that he had been transported from a filthy jail in Pushan to the back of a great stallion beside his dead father, who in fact was more alive than he'd ever known him.

Streams of red-hot molten rock spewed from mountains across the broken planet. A bright red river of heat and light burned through trees and stone, consuming all in its path. Earthquakes and tidal waves and floods assaulted the cities. A tormented earth exacted revenge on the fallen stewards who had caused its ruin. The world heaved and moaned in destruction—or was it rebirth?

"Deliver us!" cried scattered bands of fugitives, strangers, and pilgrims—those whose home had never been on earth, those of whom the world was not worthy.

On the dark planet, kingdoms of men dissolved into ruin. Like a scythe clearing a path, earthquakes brought down rows of skyscrapers. Stock exchanges crumbled. Businesses burned. All whose hope and refuge was earth . . . in an instant became homeless.

Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. And the one sitting on the horse was

named Faithful and True. For he judges fairly and then goes to war. His eyes were bright like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him, and only he knew what it meant. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. The armies of heaven, dressed in pure white linen, followed him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword, and with it he struck down the nations. He ruled them with an iron rod, and he trod the winepress of the fierce wrath of almighty God. On his robe and thigh was written this title: King of kings and Lord of lords.

The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from trees shaken by mighty winds. And the sky was rolled up like a scroll and taken away. And all of the mountains and all of the islands disappeared. Then the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy people, the people with great power, and every slave and every free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.”

Michael pointed to the earth, to the god Mammon and his consort, Babylon, and cried out, “Her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God is ready to judge her for her evil deeds. Do to her as she has done to your people. Give her a double penalty for all her evil deeds. She brewed a cup of terror for others, so give her twice as much as she gave out. She has lived in luxury and pleasure, so match it now with torments and sorrows. She boasts, ‘I am queen on my throne. I am no helpless widow. I will not experience sorrow.’ Therefore, the sorrows of death and mourning and famine will overtake her in a single day. She will be utterly consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her is mighty.”

The rulers of the world who took part in her immoral acts and enjoyed her great luxury mourned for her as they saw the smoke rising from her charred remains. They stood at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They cried out, “How terrible, how terrible for Babylon, that great city! In a single moment God’s judgment came upon her.”

They wept and mourned over the destruction . . . for they had become inseparable from the gods they worshiped.

Now but a hundred feet above scorched earth, Reader, riding a great horse behind Michael, cried out, “In your cities was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, the young and the old, the tiny and the grown. Elyon has beheld the blood of all who have been murdered on the earth.” He turned to the multitude of riders behind him and said, “But you, O heaven, rejoice over her fate. And you also rejoice, O holy people of God and apostles and prophets! For at last God has judged her on your behalf.”

Even as Reader spoke, a great beast mobilized the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against the Rider and his army. All eyes that could bear to look fixed upon the Man on the great white steed, the Man with the face of the lion, eyebrows singed by the awful heat of his anger. But their eyes could not stay upon him, for he caused their hearts to melt like ice under the noonday sun.

The battle cry of a hundred million warriors erupted from one end of the heavens to the other. There was war on that narrow isthmus between heaven and hell, a planet called Earth. The air was filled with the din of combat—the wails of oppressors being slain and the joyous celebrations of the oppressed, rejoicing that at long last their liberators had arrived.

Some of the warriors sang as they slew, swinging swords to hew the oppressors with one arm and, with the other, pulling victims up onto their horses.

The long arm of the King moved with swiftness and power. The hope of reward that kept the sufferers sane was vindicated at last. No child of heaven was touched by the sword this day, for the universe could not tolerate the shedding of one more drop of righteous blood.

Heaven released fury. Earth bled fear. It was the old world’s last night.

At the Lion’s nod, Michael raised his mighty sword and brought it down upon the great dragon. His muscles bulging at the strain, Michael picked up his evil twin and cast the writhing beast into a great pit. The mauler of men, the hunter of women, the predator of children, the persecutor of the righteous shrieked in terror. The vast army of heaven’s warriors cheered.

The battalions of Charis gazed upon the decimated face of the earth, the scorched soil of the old world. Nothing had survived the fires of this holocaust of things. Nothing but the King's Word, his people, and the deeds of gold and silver and precious stones they had done for him during the long night since Eden's twilight.

Soldiers dropped their weapons, the crippled tossed their crutches and ran, the blind opened their eyes and saw. They pointed and shouted and danced, throwing their arms around each other, for each knew that any now left on earth were under the King's blood and could be fully trusted. The King gathered children upon his lap. He wiped away their tears.

Then spoke the powerful voice of Reader, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"

The sound of a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and loud peals of thunder, shouted, "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. She wears the fine linen, bright and clean, of the righteous acts of the saints, empowered by the King."

Michael wiped blood from his sword and carefully placed it back in its scabbard. He called to Writer in a thunderous voice, heard above the rejoicing multitudes, "Write it down—blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" All eyes turned to the King. The entire universe fell silent, anticipating his words.

"I will turn the wasteland into a garden," the King announced. "I will bring here the home I have made for you, my bride. There will be a new world, a life-filled blue-green world, greater than all that has ever been. The Shadowlands are mine again, and I shall transform them. My kingdom has come. My will shall be done. Winter is over. Spring is here at last!"

A great roar rose from the vast crowd. The King raised his hands. Upon seeing those scars, the cheering crowds remembered the unthinkable cost of this great celebration.

Warriors slapped each other on the back. The delivered hugged their deliverers, enjoying a great reunion with those once parted from them. In the milling crowd two men came face-to-face. Their eyes locked on each other. Li Quan and Ben Fielding embraced.

The multitudes innumerable began to sing the song for which they had been made, a song that echoed off a trillion planets and reverberated in a quadrillion places in every nook and cranny of the creation's expanse. Audience and orchestra and choir all blended into one great symphony, one grand cantata of rhapsodic melodies and powerful sustaining harmonies. All were participants. Only one was an audience, the Audience of One. The smile of the King's approval swept through the choir like fire across dry wheat fields.

When the song was complete, the Audience of One stood and raised his great arms, then clapped his scarred hands together in thunderous applause, shaking ground and sky, jarring every corner of the cosmos. His applause went on and on, unceasing and unstoppable.

Among the great throngs of worshipers of Yesu, standing side by side, were the families of Li Quan and Ben Fielding, women and children seeing each other for the first time, but not the last.

Every one of them realized something with undiminished clarity in that instant. They wondered why they had not seen it all along. What they knew in that moment, in every fiber of their beings, was that this Person and this Place were all they had ever longed for . . . and ever would.

Learn more about *Safely Home*

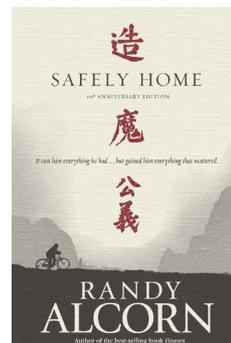
Is this the day I die?

Quan stiffened at the shout behind him. "You meet in the night like the criminals you are. How dare you defy the law? In three minutes we will shoot every man, woman, and child who does not declare himself loyal to the people rather than the gwelios, foreign devils.

American business executive Ben Fielding has no idea what his brilliant old college roommate is facing in China. But when they're reunited in China after twenty years, the men are shocked at what they discover about each other.

Thrown together in an hour of encroaching darkness, watched by unseen eyes, both must make choices that will determine not only the destinies of two men, but two families, two nations...and two worlds.

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About Randy Alcorn

Randy is the founder and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries and the best-selling author of over 50 books (over nine million in print) including *Heaven*, *The Treasure Principle*, and the Gold Medallion winner *Safely Home*.



About Eternal Perspective Ministries

Eternal Perspective Ministries (EPM) is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to teaching principles of God's Word and assisting the church in ministering to the unreached, unfed, unborn, uneducated, and unsupported people around the world.

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