

# IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

by

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(Author of *Mark of the Beast*)

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### “LILY WORK”

THE room we now enter is a large one. It is close under the roof of a house in Finsbury. The man there at work pauses for a moment.

The room is a workshop. The man is a Jew - but what a Jew! He might have posed to an artist as a model, a type of the proudest Jewish monarch over Israel. Face, form, stature - not even Saul or David or Solomon could have excelled him.

The room held the finished workmanship of his hands for the three past years. And now, as he paused in his labour - a labour of love - for a moment, and drew his tall form erect, and lifted his face to the window above him, a light that was almost holy filled his eyes.

"GOD of our fathers," he murmured, "GOD of the Holy Tent and of the Temple, instruct me; teach my fingers to do this great work."

He let his hands fall with an almost sacred touch upon the chapter he had been chasing. He wist not that his face shone with an unearthly light, as for a moment his lips moved in prayer. Then quietly reaching a thick old book from a shelf, he opened it at one of its earlier pages, and read aloud.

**"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all kinds of workmanship.**

**“And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle.”**

The light - it was now almost a fire - deepened in his eyes. A rare, a rich, cadence filled his voice as he read the holy words. His fingers moved to the middle of the book. It easily opened at a certain place, as though it had been often used at that page. Again he read aloud:

**"And the chapters that were upon, the top of the pillars were of lily work, . . . and the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, . . . and the pomegranates were two hundred, in rows round about upon the other chapter, and he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin (*"He shall establish"*); and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz (*"In it is strength"*). And on the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished."**

With a reverent touch the man closed the book, replaced it on the shelf, then, lifting his eyes again to where the cold, clear light streamed down through the great skylight in the ceiling, he murmured:

**"How long, O Lord, shall Thy people be cast off and trodden down, and their land, Thy land, be held by the accursed races?"**

For a moment a look of pain swept into his face. Then, as he became conscious of the touch of his lowered hand upon the chapter, his eyes travelled downwards to the exquisite **"lily work,"** and the light of a new hope swept the pain off his face.

"The very fact that the time has come," he murmured, "for us to be preparing for the next temple, is a token from The Lord that the day of Messiah draweth nigh."

His eyes lingered a moment on the rare and beautiful workmanship, then he took up a chasing tool and continued his toil; yet, while he worked he kept up a running recitative of Ezekiel's description of the great temple - for he knew by heart all the chapters of that prophet.

As he presently repeated the words: **"And the Prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth,"** he lifted his eyes with a deep holy rapture shining in all his face.

He closed his recitative with a ringing note of triumph in his voice, as he cried, **"It shall be round about eighteen thousand cubits: and the name of the city from that day shall be [Jehovah-Chammah], The Lord is there."**

There was a moment of absolute silence. The graver was still, the hand that held it might have been stone, so rigid did it become.

The lips of Abraham Cohen moved, but no other sound came from him save the words "**The Lord was there,**" and he prayed aloud.

In the midst of his rapt devotion the door of the workroom opened. The slight sound aroused the dreamer. He turned his face in the direction of the door, and his eyes flashed with pleasure.

"Ah - Zillah!" he cried in greeting. The girl he addressed closed the door, thus shutting out the odor of frying fish. She crossed the floor quickly, with a certain eagerness, and came towards him with a rare grace. She was singularly beautiful, of an Eastern style of beauty. Her complexion was of the Spanish olive tone, and her melting eyes were of that same Spanish type. Her hair - a wondrous crown of it - was blueblack. She had a certain plumpness of form that seemed to add rather than take from her general beauty. She was sister to his wife.

"Supper will be ready in five minutes, Abraham," she began. "Will you be ready for it?"

He smiled down into her great black eyes. He was never very keen on his meals. He ate to live only; he did not live to eat. She knew that, and had long since learned that his labour of love was as meat and drink to him. Her eyes glided past him and rested on his work.

"It is very beautiful, Abraham!" she cried. There was reverence as well as rapture and admiration in her voice and glance.

"It cannot be too beautiful, Zillah," he returned.

Her eyes were on his work. His were on her face. He read in it the rapturous admiration of his workmanship.

"When will the Messiah come?" she sighed.

"Soon, I believe!" he returned. "The Lord rested in His creative work after six days' labour. A thousand years with Him are as one day. May it not well be, then, that as there have passed nearly six thousand years (each thousand years, representing one day) that He will presently rest in His finished work for His people, through the coming of the Messiah, as He did at the creation?"

He laid his tool aside, and turned to the beautiful girl, as he continued:

"Besides, do not our sacred books say that when three springs have been discovered on Mount Zion, Messiah will come? Two springs have lately been discovered by the excavators in Jerusalem, and our people out there excitedly watch the work of these men, expecting soon the discovery of the third spring."

Her eager, parted lips told how she hung upon his speech. He smiled down gratefully into her great black lustrous eyes, though a sigh escaped him as he said:

"Ah! I wish Leah would only show a little of the interest in all this, that you do, Zillah!"

"You must not blame Leah too much, Abraham," the girl answered quickly. "She has her children, you know. Mother always said that if ever Leah had babies, that there would be nothing else in the world for her except the babies. Besides, Abraham, no two of us are constituted alike, and Leah is what the Gentiles about here call happy-go-lucky. But, Abraham, tell me more of what you think of Messiah's coming. Leah's five minutes will be sure to run to a quarter of an hour."

"I do think Messiah is coming soon," cried the young fellow excitedly. "Who knows? Perhaps when the Passover comes again, and we set His chair, and open the door for Him to enter, that He will suddenly come. Did I tell you, Zillah, about the date discovery at Safed, in Palestine?"

"No, what is it?" The girl's face glowed with a strange earnestness, her voice rang with it.

"Safed," he went on, quickly, "is a little town to the north-west of Galilee. Our Rabbi there has discovered from our sacred books, that Messiah's coming, and the overthrow of our enemies, will be in the year five thousand six hundred and sixty - six-nineteen hundred and six according to the Gentile reckoning. Our Father Moses, and all the children of Israel sang, when The Lord delivered them from the Red Sea:- **'Yea, by the force of Thy swelling waves hast Thou demolished those who arose against Thee. Thou didst discharge Thy wrath, it devoured them up like stubble.'** Our Rabbis - and even the Christian Gentile teachers - agree that the deliverance of our race from Pharaoh, and the destruction of his hosts, picture our race's future as well as its past. And the numerical value of **'Thou shalt overthrow'** (part of those two song-stanzas I have just repeated) gives the date I have mentioned as the time of our deliverance from all our troubles, when Messiah shall come."

There was a sudden clatter of little feet outside at that moment, and a boy and a girl burst into the room.

"What do you think, father?" cried the boy, with the excited impulsiveness of a child bursting with news. "A boy - he's a Gentile, of course - whom I know says that Messiah has come, that the cursed Nazarene was He. and that -"

"We will go to supper, Reuben, and you and I will talk about that another time." Cohen spoke quietly to his boy. He had his own reasons for checking the subject at that time.

His aunt caught the boy's hand, and danced with him out of the room. Rachel, the little girl, a wondrous miniature of Zillah, clung to her father, and the whole family trooped off to wash their hands before the meal.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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