

LAZARUS  
EFFECT



# LAZARUS EFFECT

A NOVEL

DANIEL PAUL VEIRS



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# DEDICATION

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**T**here was a day in my life when our heavenly Father brought me a dream girl. With His help (because I was too thick and occupied with work), I courted and married her—never realizing she was *my* dream girl. Over the years, that wonderful fact began to slowly penetrate my thick skull. I don't know the precise moment it happened, but the little four-watt finally lit. To say that she is everything to me would only give you the barest indication of how I feel for this woman. I did, in fact, marry my dream girl. She is only one of the blessings our heavenly Father has bestowed upon me.

I shall love her until the day after tomorrow.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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To my grandkids: Bug, Ninja, Dueces, Squeeker, Sas, Edge, Quark, and Batt. I love you all. Can't wait to see what you think of this.

To my mom and dad: your contributions are too many to list, but thanks for them all.

A special thanks to my wife, Bev. It's getting closer.

To the editors and staff at Redemption Press: Thanks for coming to the rescue.

To God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: thanks for this adventure we call life. Awesome!

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life;  
he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,  
And everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.  
Do you believe this?"*

*John 11:25–26 (NASB)*

# ONE

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**I**t was an important time in history. Not the kind of history humans think important enough to record, but the intricate subtle workings of a sovereign God. It was through individual people, seemingly ordinary, that God's plan was furthered. Each individual's decision affected countless others, building like tiny drops of rain that eventually turn into an ocean. It was complex, but necessary, for God to preserve freedom of choice. That very complexity allowed no one's abilities, save God's, to be adequate for the task. Though invisible to those who wanted a billboard to show them the way, if a human chose to look, the hand of God was clear to see.

It was time to bring one man to the point of decision. It was his history that T'cher thought of as he descended into a bedroom. The bedroom was not that of his charge. It was the bedroom of a woman besieged by those fallen who sought out their prey with the ruthlessness of a hungry lion. Like so many others, the woman never sensed their presence.

A strong sense of evil hung in the air of the bedroom, caused by the dark forms around the sleeping human. Two middle-sized beings drew scimitars in warning to T'cher. A larger being, stroking

the human with one gnarled hand while the claws of his other were inserted into the woman's brain, spoke without a glance.

"You are outnumbered, foolish one. Quite heavily, I should say."

T'cher responded calmly, "As it appears."

Something akin to a grin appeared on the dark one's face. It paused briefly, as if to tell T'cher without words that he was no threat. Then it motioned without looking toward one of T'cher's brothers standing in a corner of the room. While doing this, the monster raised its whirling red eyes to T'cher. "I see you have not come for battle. Perhaps a strategic withdrawal? Come, we must break bread as befits our kinship, brother."

"You have lost that claim, evil one."

"Then let us celebrate as old friends."

"That too you have lost."

"As respectful enemies then, or even, if you prefer, mutual combatants."

"And what would we be celebrating?"

"Why, your intelligence, of course, and that of your commander, at knowing when a battle is lost and too costly to continue for the paltry prize it has to offer."

"I suppose you are referring to the sleeping human?"

"As well you know."

"Then I must decline."

"Come, old friend, let us be above pettiness. It is no shame to lose one tiny battle in the context of such a war."

"You are wrong on all counts, dark one." T'cher said, "that there will be a withdrawal, that the battle for this one is lost, and that there is some great war. God does not withdraw from humans . . . ever. Always He is present, awaiting their awakening. Always the battle continues, each soul worth the cost. But don't mistake the deceitful attempts to thwart a father's authority of an unrepentant child as *war*. War suggests some level of parity between the parties. As you well know, there is none."

“False bravado, my friend.”

“That is *your* master’s domain, not mine.” T’cher reminded the demon.

The vile creature’s eyes narrowed. “We shall see, messenger.”

“Yes, I fear we shall. And that will be a sad day.” T’cher began to rise toward the ceiling.

The bat-like creature spat at him, “Not for those of us who are victorious!”

T’cher’s movement stopped as he gazed at the creature for a moment. Then he dropped his head. “Yes, misled one, for all of us.” He turned his head toward his comrade in the corner. “Stand, brother. Stand.”

Eyes met, a nod, and T’cher was gone.

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Gabe shifted position for the umpteenth time that night. His mind raced with partial playbacks of the conversations he and his wife, Joannie, had been having the past few weeks. He wasn’t consciously aware of the dark forms dive-bombing him like mosquitoes, but it was obvious he felt their presence. *That stinkin’ Bible study! I’m losin’ sleep over a Bible study I didn’t even attend!* One more time he rolled over, finally finding a comfortable position. *Ahh. That’s better.* He sighed as sleep at last began to take him into its bosom. *Maybe God will give me the skinny on all this while I’m sleepin’ ...*

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T’cher received a message. It was time to begin. The huge being stepped forward and shooed the vile insects away with his hand. He placed his other hand on Gabe’s head and turned his face to the heavens. As he spoke, effulgent light gushed forth, sending the imps to peek around clothes from the closet. “Father, let me be worthy of Your trust. Bless me with the ability to reach the one You

have chosen and to fulfill the mission which You have bestowed upon me.”

T’cher smiled as he heard a chorus ...

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Gabe was sitting in a padded chair somewhere, with darkness surrounding him like a blanket. *Okay, what’s goin’ on?*

A voice sounded in the void. “It is time to begin, Gabriel Catrell.”

Gabe looked around, even though he knew it was useless in the blacker-than-black darkness. “Begin what?”

The voice seemed to come from everywhere—and nowhere—at the same time. “Your instruction.”

“Instruction? What instruction?”

“About the choice you must make.”

“What choice? If I’m gonna pick out china patterns, I gotta warn ya, there ain’t much light in here so they probably won’t match.”

“Please look forward.”

Gabe stopped twisting in his seat and settled his eyes in the general direction he guessed would be appropriate. “Yeah, sure, pal,” Gabe muttered under his breath. “Like I can see anything, anyway.”

Tiny specks of light began to appear. They continued to gain in intensity until Gabe recognized a screen. Without moving his head, Gabe’s eyes searched the area, discovering what appeared to be an empty movie theatre.

“We gonna watch a movie, sport?” he called out. “Hope it ain’t one of them chick flicks, know what I mean? They kinda bore me. Say, where’s the popcorn?”

“Pardon my manners. I hope this is satisfactory.”

A bag of popcorn appeared at the end of a huge, glowing hand. Gabe jumped away from the hand and quickly fell between his row of seats and the one in front of him. The hand calmly picked him

up, brushed him off while holding him above the floor, and placed him back in his seat. Gabe was offered the popcorn again.

Gabe followed the hand to its source. An immense, glowing being sat crammed into the chair beside him. Gabe's eyes grew as large as saucers as he spoke. "Yeah, sure, it's just great." He swallowed hard and looked down at the popcorn, then at the screen. His voice warbled as he continued, "This okay? I'm supposed to watch the screen, right?"

"Yes, please. I believe you will find it interesting."

Gabe cut his eyes again, this time toward his benefactor. No sarcasm colored his tone as he spoke, but perhaps a hint of fear. "You got it, friend. I'm ... uh ... watchin'."

The screen began to show a scene of people walking up and down a street in some town. As the images became clearer, Gabe saw dark beings in many forms harassing the people constantly. In addition to these specters, beings that glowed slightly—much the same as Gabe witnessed moments ago with whatever was sitting next to him—were also present.

As he continued to watch this strange film, Gabe began to feel he was watching a training film for the gladiators of old. The action surrounding a red-headed woman drew his attention. Two dark ones—one large and one smaller—came out of this woman and attacked a good-sized light one. Gabe witnessed swordplay—slash, parry, separate—repeated over and over. It seemed as if it was a standoff. The battle continued for a time, apparently without the woman's knowledge even though they were fighting right next to her. As Gabe's eyes went from person to person, he noticed to varying degrees that it happened to everyone, though the people remained oblivious.

Another few minutes of this repetition prompted Gabe to speak. "All right, what's the point of this?"

His host answered, "To show you what you do not realize."

"How does this show me anything? It's a movie. So what?"

“Your assumption is incorrect. It is not a movie.”

“Then what is it?”

“Reality.”

“What?”

“I’m sorry. Do you not understand the word?”

“Yeah, yeah, I know what it means. But how is this reality? I’ve never seen anything like this outside of a movie. They’re somebody’s fantasy. Tricks.”

“There are no tricks in what you are observing.”

Gabe’s disbelief was evident from his tone. “So you’re telling me this is real? Where?”

“Everywhere. In every town, village, and home.”

“It can’t be. I’ve never seen this *anywhere*.”

“There are more things present than you can see.”

Gabe snorted. “Oh, that’s good. What in the name of Pete does *that* mean?”

“Simply, that you rely far too much on your natural senses, mostly sight. And you are not alone.”

“So you’re telling me not to believe what I see?”

“No, I’m not. However, it is not always wise to do so. An easy example would be movies, as you stated earlier. You see those things, yet you don’t believe them. Why not?”

“Because they’re not real.”

“Why do you say that? Don’t you see them?”

“Of course. But that doesn’t mean you see everything.”

“Precisely my point.”

Gabe shook his head. “I still don’t get it.”

“You distrust movies because you know they employ tricks to make them appear real. You understand there is an underlying process, which you cannot see, that changes what you are witnessing. So, even though you see something, you still realize it cannot be so.”

“Yeah, that’s what I said, except I didn’t use so many words. I still don’t get what you’re trying to say. What does me not believing everything in movies have to do with you telling me what I just saw was reality?”

“You stated that you don’t see everything in the process of filmmaking. Correct?”

“Yeah?”

His escort queried, “Is it possible that you don’t see everything in the process of reality?”

“What process? Reality is what’s real. What’s right in front of you?”

“That’s right. Reality is what’s right in front of you—whether you see it or not.”

“Man, you’re confusing me. What’s the point?”

“That you don’t see everything with your natural senses. There are things, many things, which are invisible that you have come to accept as real. Gravity. Air. Molecules. Diseases. You cannot see any of these with un-enhanced sight, yet you accept that they are real. Now, you are being shown another.”

Gabe still didn’t grasp what his host was trying to tell him. “What are you talking about?”

“Forces acting on and around you that are not visible, yet they influence you each and every day, just like gravity. Those things are what you saw on the screen, and they are a part of reality.”

“Okay. So, you’re telling me that people are affected all the time by dark and light—whatever they are—every day?”

“Yes.”

“So what? What difference does that make to me?”

“It has to do with your choice.”

“Yeah, you said that before. What choice is this?”

The glowing figure stated, “It is time for you to choose between the light and the dark.”

“This second? I like to know my options before I make a choice. I’ve been taught if you go off half-cocked you usually make a bad decision—*choice*.” Gabe pointed at the screen. “And why am I being singled out? Why don’t those people have to make a choice?”

“They do. All in their own time. Some of those you see have already made it. Some have put it off, as you are attempting to do. There are those whose time has not yet come. However, it is your time. Perhaps you do not know enough to make an informed judgment. That is the reason for this instruction.”

“Oh. And you’re gonna tell me about it. That it?”

“To the degree I’m allowed.”

“Why should I believe what you’re telling me?” Gabe asked, shifting in his seat.

“That’s up to you. I can only lay out the truth. What you do with it is your prerogative. I believe I must make this point clear. *You will make the choice, consciously or unconsciously.*”

“Okay, so what are the dark and light things?”

“The dark are demons. The light are angels.”

“Whoa, pal. You mean this whole thing is religious?”

“No, this whole thing is what you would call a dream.”

Gabe’s jaw dropped. “A dream? You’re telling me I’m dreaming?”

“Yes. God often speaks to humans in dreams. It allows Him their undivided attention.”

“So, I’m gonna make some choice that I’m not even going to remember? Why would I do that?”

“You will remember. *Vividly*. He will make sure of that. That is one way to tell if it is a message from God. Additionally, it will be confirmed. This is important. God will always confirm what He tells you. That allows you to distinguish between His message and those of others, or your own thoughts that could be influenced by those unseen. Now, if you will, please return your attention to the screen.”

Gabe focused on the screen again and gasped. *He* was on the screen. The theater had disappeared! Angels and demons were all around him, but the “Gabe” on the screen was unaware of their presence or activities.

He watched from somewhere as demons influenced with words and actions what he did through part of a day. He saw angels try to counter, but their influence was minute compared to the demons. Then suddenly, Gabe was watching and experiencing it at the same time. He was part of the movie, but somehow he was watching from the outside.

The angel from the theater appeared with him from nowhere, but this time, Gabe was aware. They conversed briefly, and he began to see angels and demons about him. He was not watching any longer; he was experiencing.

Gabe spoke to the angel in front of him, “What’s going on? We’re not in the theater now, but I can see everything just like I did then.”

“Your sight has been enhanced. Because it has, you can see things clearly. You can see reality. Remember that. You must determine how to do so through the things you will encounter in dreams—and in your life.”

The last part concerned Gabe. “What do you mean in my life? You mean real life?”

“Yes. There will be lessons for you to learn there also.”

“What lessons? When do they start? Are you gonna be there? What do I call you, anyway?”

“My name is unimportant,” the angel replied, “but if it will help us connect, you may call me T’cher. All of life is a lesson, if you pay attention. Yes, I will be there, but you will not see me as you do now, unless you learn to accept the ability from God.”

“So when do they start?”

“They have already started. That is why we are here.”

“I thought this had to do with a choice I had to make.”

The angel nodded. “That’s what all of this is about. You said you didn’t know your options, and when you did, you wished to consider them before making your decision—choice. The lessons will afford you that opportunity.”

“So, what’s next?”

The angel smiled. “I’m glad you finally asked.” He passed his hand over Gabe’s eyes and everything went black.

---

Gabe woke with a start and found himself in his own bed, next to his wife, Joannie. His breathing came in rapid gulps. The bedroom was dark, but not the pitch-blackness that ended his dream. His wife was sleeping soundly next to him, so he didn’t wake her when he rose. In a way, he wanted to share what had just happened, but he wasn’t quite ready to admit he’d really experienced it. After all, it was just a dream. Gabe couldn’t tell how much of it was real and how much was just his brain trying to make sense of the couple’s discussions of the last few weeks.

As he poured himself a glass of milk and sat down in a kitchen chair, he didn’t see T’cher’s wings embracing him. He was, however, able to mull over his recent experience without distraction. Everything about it was odd, including the fact that he was contemplating a dream and its possible significance to his life. Half an hour later, Gabe became so tired that he could barely keep his eyes open. He stumbled into bed and fell fast asleep. The dreams he had the rest of that night were ordinary, so he slept soundly. He wouldn’t remember those.

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The next morning Gabe fidgeted at the kitchen table of his home. Annoyance was giving way to anger. He glared in disbelief at his wife’s last statement. The dive-bombing imps were back at work, capitalizing on this emotion. T’cher waved them away, but

they were as persistent as flies buzzing around a dropped sandwich. It took a moment before he could respond. “So, you’re saying that Christians, people who have accepted Jesus as their Savior, can have demons?”

Joannie glanced down at the eighteen-month-old pulling on her shorts, “Yes, baby?”

The little girl smiled up at her mother, oblivious that she was interrupting a very serious discussion. Joannie’s baby pointed dramatically at the fridge, speaking louder than necessary. “Mommy. Dink.”

Joannie smiled at her little one. “Would you like something to drink, sweetie?”

The child nodded emphatically, beaming that her mission was successful.

Joannie moved quickly to the refrigerator to see to her daughter’s needs while Gabe followed her with a hard stare that she avoided. She motioned to first one, then another container sitting on the shelf as she spoke. “Would you like apple juice or Kool-Aid?”

Jackie clasped her hands in front of her little body and smiled. “Chewce.”

Joannie reached for the pitcher containing the Kool-Aid, a frown on her lips. “Kool-Aid?”

Jackie shook her head. “Chewce!”

Her mother reached for the apple juice, turning as she placed her hand on the bottle. “Juice?”

Jackie beamed and nodded.

Joannie returned her daughter’s smile. “Juice it is.”

Gabe, irritated at the extended interruption to their discussion, glared at the back of his wife’s head. “Well?”

“Oh, Gabe, I don’t know how we got into this discussion. Are you sure you want to talk about this?” She filled the cup and snapped the lid in place before handing it down to her little darling. Jackie took the cup and turned it upside down to empty the contents

as quickly as possible. Thanks to the design of the infant lid, none of the liquid spilled.

One of the devilkin thrust its claws briefly into Gabe's brain. "Yeah, I do! You're saying that becoming a Christian doesn't change anything. I can't accept that. When you become a Christian, you're filled with the Holy Spirit. That would drive out any demons you had. It's pretty simple, really. The Holy Spirit and demons can't exist in the same place. What you're saying is about the stupidest thing I've ever heard."

"Christians aren't perfect, Gabe. I agree with you that demons can't exist where the Holy Spirit is, but you're missing the point."

"What is the point? That what I've said doesn't jibe with your new guru's teaching?"

"What guru?"

"The almighty Sam."

"He's not a guru. He's a man of God."

"He's a nut. If he's telling you that demons can live in Christians, he's some kind of cult leader."

"Why? Because you don't agree with it? Did you ever think you could be wrong?"

"Did you ever think *he* could be wrong?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I have. He says to question what he teaches. He tells us to look it up for ourselves. He tells us if what he teaches doesn't agree with the letter or the spirit of the Scriptures, then it's wrong. If it is, he wants to be corrected. He's just trying to help us understand the Bible's teachings. He's not starting a cult."

"Neither was Jim Jones."

"That's not fair, and you know it."

"Isn't it? From what you've said, the guy sees angels and demons. Doesn't that sound a little strange to you? Like the guy isn't dealing with a full deck?"

"Why? Because you haven't? Jesus did. Some of the apostles did."

Gabe's dream popped into his head when she said this. Maybe that's what caused him to react so violently. Or maybe—something else did. "This guy isn't Jesus! If he's got you thinking he is, then you're getting sucked into a cult! That's exactly what I'm talking about. That's cult teaching."

Joannie sighed loudly. She kept her voice quiet, but Gabe knew she was irritated. "He doesn't say he's Jesus. In fact, he goes out of the way to make sure we don't idolize him. He tells us our teacher should be Jesus, not him. He's just there to help us establish a relationship with Jesus."

"He's some kind of expert on that, right? You gotta do it his way, or you can't do it. That's a cult."

"That's not how he teaches at all."

"I know. He teaches stuff nobody else does. What makes him right and everybody else wrong? Nobody else teaches that stuff, or ever has."

"Paul did."

"What are you talking about?"

"In his letters to the Ephesians and the Corinthians. He taught about spiritual warfare. He wrote those letters to people who were supposed to be Christians. Why would he bother addressing it if there wasn't some reason to? They had a problem then."

"That was then; this is now," Gabe declared. "I'm telling you, this guy is some kind of cult leader, or maybe even a Satanist."

"How can you say that? You've never even been to one of the Bible studies!"

"Simple. Nobody else teaches this stuff."

"Actually, there are some who do."

"Yeah, people you never heard of. They're weirdoes too. Real preachers don't say anything like this stuff."

"So, if you're in the minority, you're automatically wrong? What about Jesus? What about the apostles? What about Martin Luther?"

They were all in the minority. They went against majority thinking because God told them different.”

“Yeah, *God* told them different. Who’s tellin’ this guy?”

“Did you ever think maybe God is?”

Something was pricked by that question, but Gabe ignored it. “Nope. This guy doesn’t talk to God, he talks to himself. God wouldn’t tell him to teach this kind of bull. It doesn’t make any sense. Like you said, it doesn’t jibe with the Bible, so it’s got to be wrong. How can you say a demon and the Holy Spirit can both exist in the same place? It doesn’t happen that way. When we’re saved, the Holy Spirit fills us up. There’s no room for demons.”

Joannie considered. “Let me see if I can remember this right.”

“Oh, he’s got an answer for that.”

“Yes, he does, and it makes a lot of sense.”

“Course it does.”

“Imagine your spirit as a house, a house with many rooms.”

Gabe rolled his eyes. “Yeah, yeah, I’m a house.”

“If you have company over, and your bedroom is messy, you shut the door and don’t let the guests go in. If they’re courteous guests, they don’t open a door that’s closed. That would be snooping.”

“Okay, so?”

“So, the Holy Spirit is company. He’s very *courteous* company. He only goes where we allow. If we keep a door closed, He won’t see that it’s a mess because He won’t open the door and snoop around.”

“The Holy Spirit is all-knowing. He doesn’t have to snoop. He already knows.”

“So could a guest,” Joannie replied. “But they don’t bring it up until we do. That room could have roaches crawling all over the place, but the guest wouldn’t embarrass us by commenting about it unless we say something first.”

“You’re forgettin’ God already knows.”

“No, I’m not. I’m just pointing out that He won’t bring it up until we do.”

“Why wouldn’t He?”

Though her voice was even, a subtle iciness flavored her tone. “Probably because He’d get the same attitude you’re having about Sam. He may have already brought it up to you, but you’re so steeped in what you’ve been taught you don’t want to listen to Him either. Something sure is getting you all worked up. Maybe this is hitting a little too close to the mark.”

His wife didn’t realize how accurate her statement was, but Gabe wasn’t ready to face that possibility. So, like a child who doesn’t want to do something, he threw a fit. “Are you saying I have demons?”

Joannie backpedaled. She’d said the wrong thing, and worse than that, in the wrong way. She tried to make amends. “No, I can’t say that. I don’t know.”

Three imps landed and injected simultaneously. T’cher swatted, with one hand on the human’s shoulder.

Gabe shoved back his chair and pointed a finger in his wife’s face. “This is baloney. I’ll tell you what. I’ll use your system. If there really are demons and angels around us all the time, I’m askin’ God, right now, to show me. Let me see them like this Sam guy does. And if they can live in a Christian, I’m askin’ Him to show me that too. Fair enough?” He strode from the room to get dressed for work, not waiting for her answer.

It was Joannie’s turn to watch with her mouth agape.