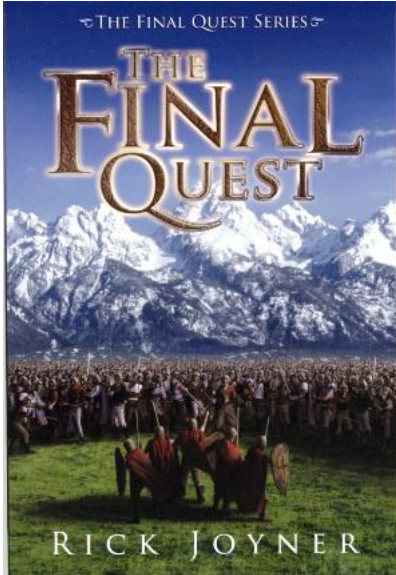


A Chapter from the Final Quest by Rick Joyner



The Prison

Clare: As an aside here, all day a thought has been coming to me. Rich Joyner's dream of the prison yard, where men and women with machine guns and uniforms were standing guard as he came as a reporter to find out what was going on here. He mentioned something about the security in the prison.

The Prison

Suddenly, I was standing in a large prison yard. There were huge walls such as I had never seen before. They extended for as far as I could see, hundreds of feet high and very thick. There were other fences and razor wire in front of the wall. Every few hundred feet there were guard towers along the top of the wall. I could see guards in each one, but they were too far away for me to see much about them.

It was grey, dark and dreary, which seemed to perfectly reflect the mass of people who stood in the prison yard. All over the yard, people sat in groups of their own kind. Old black men were in one group, young black men in another. Old and young white men also stayed apart, and the women were also separated. With every race, this seemed to be the same. Those with any distinguishing characteristic were separated, except for the youngest children. Between the groups, many people seemed to be milling around. As I watched, I could tell that they were trying to find their own identity by finding the group which they were the most like. However, it was obvious that these groups did not let anyone join them easily.

As I looked more closely at these people, I could see that they all had deep wounds and many scars from previous wounds. Except for the children, they all seemed to be nearly blind and could only see well enough to stay in their own group. Even within their groups, they were constantly trying to see the differences that others might have. When they found even a small difference, they would attack the one who was different.

They all seemed hungry, thirsty and sick. I approached an older man and asked him why they were all in prison. He looked at me in astonishment, declaring emphatically that they were not in prison, and why would I ask such a stupid thing. I pointed at the fences and the guards, and he replied, "What fences? What guards?" He looked at me as if I had insulted him terribly, and I knew that if I asked him anything else, I would be attacked.

I asked a young woman the same question and received the same response. I then realized that they were so blind that they could not even see the fences or the guards. These people did not know that they were in prison.

The Guard

I decided to ask a guard why these people were in prison. As I walked toward the fences, I could see holes in them that would be easy to climb through. When I reached the wall itself, I found it so irregularly built that it was easy for me to climb. Anyone could easily escape, but no one was trying because they did not know that they were captives.

When I got to the top of the wall, I could see for a great distance and saw the sun shining beyond the walls. It did not shine in the prison yard because of the height of the wall and the clouds that hung over it. I saw fires far off in the prison yard toward the end where the children were gathered. The smoke from these fires formed a thick cloud over the yard that turned what would have been just shade from the walls into a choking, dreary haze. I wondered what was burning. I walked along the top of the wall until I reached the guard post. I was surprised to find the guard dressed in a fine suit with a collar indicating that he was some kind of minister or priest. He was not shocked to see me, and I think he assumed that I was another guard.

“Sir, why are these people in prison?” I asked. That question shocked him, and I watched fear and suspicion come over him like a blanket.

“What prison?” he replied. “What are you talking about?” “I am talking about those people in this prison yard,” I said, feeling a strange boldness. “You’re obviously a prison guard because you’re in a guard house, but why are you dressed like that?” I continued.

“I am not a prison guard! I am a minister of the gospel. I am not their guard—I am their spiritual leader. This is not a guardhouse—_it is the Lord’s house! Son, if you think your questions are funny, I am not laughing!” He grabbed his gun and seemed ready to shoot at me.

“Please excuse me for disturbing you,” I replied, sensing that he would definitely use his gun. As I walked away, I expected to hear shots at any moment. The man was so insecure I knew he would shoot before thinking if he felt threatened. I could also tell that he was sincere. He really did not know that he was a guard.

The School Teacher I walked along the wall until I felt I was a safe distance away and turned to look back at the minister. He was pacing back and forth in his guardhouse, greatly agitated. I wondered why my questions disturbed him so much. It was obvious that my questions did not open him to seeing anything differently, but rather made him even more insecure and more deadly.

As I walked, I felt a desperation to find out what was going on and I thought about how I could rephrase my questions so as not to offend the next guard I tried to talk to. As I approached the next guardhouse, I was again surprised by the appearance of the guard. It was not another minister, but a young lady who was about years old.

“Miss, may I ask you some questions?” I inquired.

“Certainly. What can I help you with?” she said with a condescending air. “Are you the parent of one of these children?”

“No,” I responded. “I am a writer,” which I somehow knew was the answer I should give her. As I expected, this got her attention.

Not wanting to make the same mistake I had made with the minister by calling what he was standing in a “guard house,” I asked the young lady why she was standing in “that place.” Her response was immediate, and she seemed surprised that I did not know.

“I’m a school teacher, so don’t you think it quite natural that I should be in my school?”
“So this is your school,” I replied, indicating the guard house.

“Yes. I’ve been here for three years now. I may be here the rest of my life. I love what I’m doing so much.” This last remark was so mechanical that I knew I would discover something if I pressed her.

“What do you teach? It must be interesting for you to consider spending the rest of your life doing it.” “I teach general science and social studies. It is my job to shape the philosophy and world view of these young minds. What I teach them will steer them for the rest of their lives. What do you write?” she inquired.

“Books,” I responded, “I write leadership books,” anticipating her next question. I also somehow knew that if I had said, “Christian leadership books,” our conversation would have ended. She seemed even more interested after this answer.

“Leadership is an important subject,” she stated, still with a slightly condescending air. “Changes are happening so quickly that we must have the right leadership tools to steer these changes in the right direction.”

“What direction is that?” I asked.

“Toward the prosperity that can only come through peace and security,” she replied, as if she were surprised that I would even ask such a question.

“I don’t mean to offend you,” I replied, “but I’m interested in your views on this. What do you feel is the best way for this peace and security to be achieved?”

“Through education of course. We are together on this spaceship earth and we have to get along. Through education, we are helping deliver the masses from their caveman, tribal mentality to understand that we are all the same and that if we all do our part for Society, we will all prosper together.” “That’s interesting,” I replied, “but we are not all the same. It is also interesting that all of the people down there are becoming even more divided and separated than ever. Do you think that it may be time to possibly modify your philosophy a bit?”

She looked at me in both amazement and agitation, but obviously not because she even considered for a moment that what I said was true.

“Sir, are you completely blind?” she finally responded.

“No, I believe I see quite well,” I answered. “I have just come from walking among the people and have never seen such division and animosity between different people groups. It seems to me that the conflict between them is worse than ever.”

I could tell that my statements were like slaps in the face to this young lady. It was as if she just could not believe someone was even saying these things, much less believing that there was a chance there might be some truth to them. As I watched her, I could tell that she was so blind that she could barely see me. She was in such a high tower that there was no way that she could see the people below. She really did not know what was going on, but sincerely thought that she could see everything.

“We are changing the world,” she said with obvious disdain. “We are changing people. If there are still people acting like beasts such as you described, we will change them, too. We will prevail. Mankind will prevail.”

“That is quite a responsibility for someone so young,” I remarked.

She bristled even more at that statement, but before she could respond, two women appeared walking toward the door of the guardhouse along the top of the wall. One was a black woman who appeared to be in her fifties and the other was a very well dressed white woman who was probably in her early thirties. They talked with each other as they walked, and both appeared confident and dignified. I could tell that they could see, which is obviously how they reached the top of the wall.

To my surprise, the young school teacher grabbed her gun and stepped outside of the guardhouse to meet them, obviously not wanting these women to get any closer. She greeted them with a very superficial cheerfulness and an obvious air of superiority that she seemed to want to impress on them. To my surprise, the two women became timid and overly respectful of one who was so much younger.

“We’ve come to ask about something our children are being taught that we do not understand,” the black woman stated, mustering some courage.

“Oh, I’m sure that a lot is now taught that you do not understand,” the teacher replied condescendingly. The women kept looking at the teacher’s gun, which she handled in such a way so that they would constantly be aware of it. I was standing close by, amazed by this whole scene. The teacher turned and looked at me nervously. I could tell that she was afraid I might say something to the women. As she fingered the gun, she demanded that I leave. The women looked up to see to whom she was talking, and I realized that they could not see me. Their fear had blinded them.

I called out to the women, entreating them to have courage and believe what they felt in their heart. They looked in my direction as if they could only hear noise. They were losing their ability to hear as well. Seeing this, the young teacher smiled. She then aimed her gun at me and blew a whistle. I felt as if she perceived me to be the most dangerous person alive. I knew that I could not wait for whoever she had called with her whistle. I also realized that if I just stepped back a little, I would be safe because this young teacher was so blind. I was right. I walked away with her screaming, blowing her whistle, and finally becoming so enraged that she began to shoot at the two women. As I stood on top of the wall between two guard posts wondering about all of this, I felt the presence of Wisdom.

“You must return to the prison yard. I will be with you. Know that you have the vision to escape any trap or weapon. Only remember that fear can blind you. As you walk in the faith that I am with you, you will always see the way to go. You must also be careful to only reveal your vision to those to whom I lead you.

Vision is what the guards fear the most. I know you want to ask me a lot of questions, but they will be better answered by the experiences you will have there.”