

*Readers will be drawn into the story by a character who has made many poor decisions that almost cost his life. Instead, through God's hand, people and an evil enemy Bake is transformed into a hero of his day, that still lies in the future.*

## **Bake's Brigade: An End Times Tale**

By John F. Finkbeiner

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# Bake's Brigade

*An End Times Tale*



**John F. Finkbeiner**

A CAMPS OF GOD LAST DAY'S ADVENTURE

## ***Bake's Brigade: An End Time's Tale***

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## Chapter 3

Peter's car pulled into the Camp of God and emptied out. A man shook Bake's arm to wake him up. "Where am I?" Bake muttered.

"Easy brother," the man said. His head was shaved, and a thick beard covered much of his friendly grin. Bake noticed the big hand on him, and the faded tattoo.

"The name is Isaaks. We'll tell you all you need to know," the welcomer said grabbing Bake's hand to help him to his feet.

"You were a wrestler and a pretty good one I bet."

"Yeh, maybe once, but how did you know?"

"Your shoulder. Your neck. Your grip. I know it's been a little while, but your strength will hold you in good stead here. Grab your pack. Let's go through the narrow gate."

"What's the sign say?" Bake stopped for a moment to focus on the inscription over the gate: "Whosoever will, may come."

"And what does that mean?"

Isaaks replied, "Just what it says. You're a 'whosoever' so let's get going. We have some rough road ahead Mr. Wrestlin' Man."

A dozen steps inside, Bake looked to see what was written on the inside of the gate. "Chosen from the foundation of the world," was the inscription. Is that what Bake was feeling? Was he chosen because this place had certainly been in his dreams? How many times had he seen this? How did he know to look at the inscription inside the gate? How did he instinctively know what he would see? He couldn't possibly have been in this Camp before—if that is what

it was. Bake had to shake his head. He was being escorted and a whole new world was before him.

The bearded man wasn't lying. It was a rocky, rough road they were travelling. Bake knew he was not checking into a luxury hotel, but he had no worries. When he reached the path's end, he caught a glimpse of Wendy. A sense of well-being came over him. He was being drawn into a world he almost missed. What was this place behind the tall hedge? Wendy turned her head to see Bake, and then she smiled and waved.

"This way, Bake."

"Hey, how did you know my name?"

"Which name? You mean Bayer Kasey Sterling the third."

"What?" Bake loudly asked while reaching for his wallet. He thought his I.D. had been stolen. It was there in his back pocket, "This is so weird," Bake thought to himself.

Nudging him along, Isaaks confessed, "We received word from the Fellowship you were coming. I'm the welcome committee."

A portrait on the wall caught Bake's attention. With his Sunday hat and white beard, the man in the portrait looked like many of the Mennonite farmers in the area, erect, clear-eyed, and God-fearing, "Josiah Franz Zwicker," Bake read. "Who is this?" he asked.

"You might say he founded this Camp. He named it after his wife. We would not be here if Josiah had not let God use him."

"Then Mr. Josiah is dead," Bake asked with a quizzical look.

"Not really. You will meet him soon enough."

Moving his head back and forth in confusion, Bake was led into a room and seated. A bottle of water and the table separated him from Joshua, his interviewer. Bake noted how young he looked. He was maybe 19 but could have been 17 years old.

“Hello, my name is Joshua, but you can call me Josh. I am happy to meet you. My job is to tell you about this place you will call home for a little while,” he said.

“How do you know so much?” Bake asked. “You seem so sure I’ll like it here?”

“You will more than like it. I know because you wouldn’t be sitting in that chair had God not led you to this place.”

“Trust me,” Josh calmly said, “you’ve been on the edge of hell and almost fell in, but God’s protection has been on you.” Josh continued. The devil desires to have you. He has drowned you in alcohol and fed you drugs, but you did not become addicted, did you? The great prostitute’s daughters lured you into sexual sin, but the Spirit of God saved you from an adulterer’s death. Am I making my case, Bake?”

“Randy desired your company his last day on earth, but he could not wake you. Oh, yes, you’d be dead from the fentanyl, too, had your God not put you in a deep sleep. Do you want to know more?”

“You blocked out every thought of your mother and father’s grief. They dreaded hearing the phone ring, wondering if it was the police to tell them you were dead.” Since you were a baby, they saved a part of the paycheck so you could go to college and make something of yourself. To show your appreciation, you were expelled.

This charge got to Bake. He buried his face in his hands as the tears flowed. Josh continued, “Suicide and mental illness were after you. The demons tried to drag you into hell. God gave you enough

clarity to pack your clothes and walk out of town. Your life was hanging by a thread. Sin had almost mastered you.”

Sobbing uncontrollably, Bake was gently lifted from his chair. Joshua added, “You had no fear of God or regard for His commands. In your arrogance and disrespect for your parents’ faith, you caused them untold sorrow. You led a self-centered, spoiled, and worthless existence. You became the person you used to loath.”

“Aaagghhh!” Bake let out a loud cry then continued weeping. Joshua’s job was done. He wrote something in his folder, then put it into his briefcase as Bake left the room. “What had happened in there,” he wondered to himself. He was being washed from the inside is the best way he could describe it. Bake had no control over the tears for his past sin-sick ways. He was looking at his life from God’s perspective. He was not finished. More sobbing was required. Unknown to Bake, he had passed his first test. He was repenting.

He would later learn “Deep, sincere, repentance is the way to true righteousness. The wicked cannot fake or duplicate repentance. Pride will not let them admit they are sinful. They will cite some misfortune or blame someone like Randy or even God. Many wicked plunge into a form of self-loathing and self-pity and live among the homeless and friendless of the world. This would not be Bake’s fate.”

He was led by a friend into the noisy, open room. It was through tear-filled eyes that Bake saw Wendy on the floor crying, “I’m sorry. I’m so sorry Jesus. How could I have hurt you so?”

Bake took a few more steps and the emotional pain of his sins overwhelmed him. He collapsed on the floor and wept until he had no more tears. “How long would the bitter anguish continue?”

It was then an older brother put out his hand. “My name is Joseph. Jesus came to save sinners. That’s the good news. He died

on the cross so you could be forgiven by God. Ask Jesus to take away your sin and corruption, and wash you clean. His precious blood covered over your sin. Invite Jesus into your heart and allow him to take over.” Bake looked up and into Joseph’s eyes and nodded “Yes.”

After praying for forgiveness and mercy, Joseph counseled him about the empty tomb, and Jesus’ soon coming again for his own. The next step was to go to the pool to be baptized. Brother Joseph dipped Bake *into* the water *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. From that time on, Bake was a new man in Christ.

\*

In the valley miles away, military transport trucks were driving into Bake’s hometown. They carried the Army of Occupation. In the lead were military and civilian vehicles with the officers and command staff for the Global Peacekeepers. In one of the cars was the man the district sent to congress in the last three elections.

The sight was ominous to those who grew up in a different time. Townspeople who went to school and to church in the valley tried to shake off the nightmare. Those who foresaw trouble never imagined anything so bad. Foreigners ready to kill had arrived to oppress, intimidate, enslave, and take away any semblance of peace.

\*

Through blurry eyes Bake looked again at the portrait. This time something else caught Bake’s eye. It was a brass plate. Etched into it was: “In Memory of Josiah Franz Zwicker, Visionary, Philanthropist and Lover of the Brethren. Commissioned for *Camp Eirene*, by long-time friend, Merle ‘Chief’ Davenport.”

\*



On Glens Mills' main street, a man named Eric, a familiar face at the local supermarket, stood as the Global Peacekeeper's caravan passed. In defiance, he turned his back as the Supreme Commander of North America went by in his black Mercedes-Benz limo.

Moments later, the caravan came to a halt. Six of the android Global Peacekeepers came from nowhere and surrounded Eric. Without hesitation, a lead-core wooden stick struck his lower back and down Eric went. Writhing in pain, the GP struck him again with force, this time shattering his kneecap.

Larry Weir, a shop owner in town, witnessed what happened to his friend Eric. Unwilling to have him struck again, Larry grabbed a GP's raised stick preventing another blow. All the negative attention fell on Larry. A blow from another GP came down hard on his shoulder and then on his thigh knocking him to his knees. The GP raised him off the ground by his elbows. With his feet dangling above the pavement, Larry was taken in the direction of the GP headquarters and Eric with him.

Eric appeared days later walking with a stiff right leg, but Larry was missing. Word of the brutal beatings filtered through town to Bruce, Larry's good friend.

At the tavern, a couple of Larry's friends, including Eric, sat down to discuss the situation. Bruce said, "We can't sit back and do nothing. There might be some way we can help."

"Yeh, but what do you think they'll do to us for asking questions?" someone asked. "You heard how they were going to kill Eric for just showing his back. They aren't human."

"I'm going to walk into their headquarters and inquire about Larry's well-being," Bruce said. "They probably have him locked up."

Maybe I can see my pal and show him we aren't a bunch of sniveling cowards. Who is going with me?" he challenged.

Uncle Ivan spoke up, "Junior and me will be with you," he said.

The next day Bruce, Ivan, and Junior were stopped at the main door of GP headquarters. Bruce stated his business, then waited for assistance. When an android approached, it informed the three that Larry had "an unfortunate accident." He fell down a flight of stairs and died afterward at the hospital. "Is there something else?" the robot asked. "By the way, we have positive identification of you. We expect you back soon to take the loyalty oath and receive the Mark on your forehead and right hand. You have been warned."

On the way back to the tavern, Bruce, Junior, and Uncle Ivan paused to vow their resistance to the GP's. They swore never to take the oath of loyalty. They also swore to avenge the death of friend Larry. Just how, they did not know, but they agreed, "The GP's would be sorry they ever crossed the bridge into Glens Mills."

\*

*For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.*

*Hosea 6:6*

*“The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’*

*“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers.*

*The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”*

*Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”*

*Luke 10:35-37*

## Chapter 4

“I welcome you to The Camp of God-Eirene, pronounced ay-ree-nay. Any questions?” asked the older motherly-looking woman.

“Yes, Ma’am,” said Bake. “Are my father, mother, brother and sister and her family, here or are they coming?”

“I believe the answer to that is in your hands,” she said mysteriously. “It is about time for vespers in the tent-of-meeting. Come, I will take you there.”

\*

Meanwhile, back in Glens Mills, Bake’s old living room was filled with family. His brother Jeff stood with his Bible and speaking in a low voice to those around him. “We must keep the noise down and not sing above a whisper. We don’t want attention.

“We’re scheduled to arrive an hour apart,” Jeff continued. “When it’s time to be here, come in the side door and knock two good knocks, count one-thousand one, one thousand two, then knock a third time. Debbie, you get here first Sis. We’ll follow. Mom and dad, please have the curtains pulled tight and burn only one candle. What you did tonight was perfect. Good job. We will meet at our place next. Then, dear Sis, you have the next meeting.”

Jeff said, “This morning, I was ordered to report for ‘registration, orientation, and loyalty assessment’—whatever that is it cannot be good. I’m praying about if I should show up or not. I’m hoping they forget. Whether I appear or not, I must be ready for what’s happening to others. There will be pressure to receive the Mark of the Beast, and when I refuse, they may take me away or kill us all.

Sorry to put it like that, but this is reality. We must be brave and stay very close to Jesus. His rescue is our only hope of staying alive. We must find a Camp of God. I have not given up. The Spirit is telling me we will be given another chance to enter the Narrow Gate.

“It is important we don’t talk about our meetings with anyone,” Jeff urged. “Debbie, our friend Julie, is an exception. Keep her informed. Also, keep the kids close so they don’t talk to anyone about our meetings—that includes neighbors. Some who were friends are not to be trusted. They may be snitches. They will quickly turn us in for food or gas rations or favors from the Global Peacekeepers. They plan on surviving by betraying friends or family.

“Before we pray, is there something anyone wants to share?”

Bay, Bake’s dad, had been quiet, but spoke up: “Your Mom has something we need to hear.”

“I’ve been telling Papa, how lately Bake has been showing up in my dreams. I mean it is so real.” With that she took out a small hanky and held it to her face, “This is what Bake says, ‘I’m coming for you, Ma. Tell Dad, Jeff, and Sis to be ready. I’ll soon be there.’”

The tears could not stop. Some cried with her. The family, including grandchildren, gathered around to comfort each other.

\*

Bake left the tent-of-meeting trying to figure out what just happened. It was not the first time he heard the Parable of the Good Samaritan, but never had he felt the power in God’s Word like that.

When Pastor Ken summed up the Samaritan’s love as “Finished Love” and compared it to “Unfinished Love,” it struck a major chord with Bake. The Samaritan just didn’t feel bad and pray for the victim,

he finished the job. He placed him on his donkey, then walked him to an inn. He told the innkeeper to care for the injured man and gave him the money to do the job. That was not all. On the way back, he would check with the innkeeper to see if any more was owed.

The Samaritan gave the victim “Finished Love”. The others who encountered the victim gave him religious excuses. One was a priest, and one was a Levite. They may have mumbled a prayer from the Prayer Book. They left unfinished business. It was a Samaritan who saved the man who was left for dead. His love was complete. His love was healing. The Samaritan’s love resembled that of Jesus.

Something was working in Bake’s heart that this was the love he desired. He not only wanted to be a rescuer but a finisher. Seeing the rescued in God’s camp was only the first step. Bake’s desire was to see them joyful in God’s Kingdom forever.

With whom could he share this insight? Only one person came to mind—Isaaks. Bake knew he would understand.

Bake could not figure out exactly what Eirene was. It was a camp alright. A large one at that! However, it wasn’t connected to the world he had known. The people he had met in the camp were unusual. They were happy like his mom plus his favorite schoolteacher, and a couple other Christians he knew.

Was the Camp of God heaven? No, but it was close. Bake had received strict warnings not to wander outside the camp. Danger lurked out there, which was a sign that it wasn’t heaven.

Bake was about to meet some new people when a familiar hand was laid on his arm. “Come,” Isaaks said, “we have an appointment. Well, you have the appointment, but it sounds better to say ‘we.’”

Isaaks had a major role in what Bake was experiencing. “Where are we headed?” Bake curiously asked.

“To human relations or personnel. We must find the right place for you.” Suddenly, Isaaks’ phone buzzed. “Yes,” he answered.

The voice said, “Sir, we have some trouble at the narrow gate.”

“How many do we need?”

“Two. A woman is being attacked by her boyfriend or husband.”

“On the way,” Isaaks said. “Excuse me, Bake.”

“Oh no. I’m coming!” Bake said as they broke into a fast walk.

The next minute they were in a swift moving methane-fuel vehicle. Isaaks explained, “This machine runs on cow urine. Under air pressure, it goes in the tank then away we go with our tail in the air.” Isaaks told Bake, “Stay with me and you’ll be safe.” Bake nodded.

They arrived at the disturbance to see a woman sitting against her will on the passenger side of a car. Security had blocked the vehicle’s exit. The man was demanding that he be allowed to leave the premises with his girlfriend. Security talked him out of the car and into the open. Meanwhile, security was draining the fuel tank into five-gallon containers without the man’s knowledge.

The boyfriend boasted, “I don’t care how many geeks you have,” when this is over, I’ll be driving out of here and you’ll need surgery.”

“We don’t want any trouble,” Isaaks said calmly as he joined the conversation. “We’d like to talk. That’s all.” The angry man settled a bit because he realized the new guy (Isaaks) was in charge.

“I brought my girl here to look the place over. I don’t like what I see, so I’m leaving, and Gloria is coming with me.”

"It appears she wants to stay," said Isaaks. "We cannot let you just leave as a matter of privacy. That's what the signs were for back there. You ignored them and have trespassed on private property. Plus, we have your gas, thanks to our friend Armond over there."

The boyfriend looked toward his car and Armond waved to him and smiled. Sitting on either side was a gas can.

"Why you...!" Before the big man could take another threatening step, Bake lunged, wrapping the man's legs tightly together with his arms. From the momentum, the bulky man went down hard on his back with Bake quickly on top. After a few seconds, the man rolled onto his stomach while guards converged with handcuffs.

"Three points for the double-leg take down," exclaimed Isaaks, "plus two more back points. A perfect five-point move," he said brushing the dust from Bake's shirt.

"I got a near fall. I want to see the video. It is three points for the takedown and four for the near fall. That was a seven-point move all set up by you flapping your jaws," laughed Bake.

Bringing the man to his feet with his hands cuffed behind him, it was clear the fight was over. The car keys were taken from his pocket as he was led inside with only a bruised ego.

"One more thing Steve," Isaaks said as the big boyfriend walked by, "we were expecting you and Gloria an hour ago. What kept you?"

The look on Steve's face was one of astonishment. "How did you know my name? Hey, what's with you guys?"

"I think Mr. Big is ready to talk now," said Isaaks. Turning to Bake, "Brothers, I think we may have a new member of the Fellowship of



the Ark.” Placing his arm around Bake’s back. I say we found you a job, wrestler man. What do you say to that?”

“Yeh, sure, alright,” Bake said, smiling his biggest smile.

\*

In the South, far from Camp of God-Eirene, the GP had come to another Narrow Gate. A local pastor took out a loudspeaker and identified himself as Reverend Rollins. Speaking into the mic, he began, “You will be returned to your home and given the Supreme Commander’s word that you will have food and water. You have been taught the mark of loyalty on your forehead and hand is evil. This is another fable of your so-called religious leader. You do not need to wear a mark, but we ask that you renounce your former religion. Keep your money and your house. We saved these things for you. These were lies and your camp leader, Vince Riley, knew it, but how many of you believed his stories. Come, let’s reason together.”

The GP pastor was not finished taunting, “If you walk out of this cow pasture and stand with us in front of this joke of a fortress, you will be saving yourself. You have my word; you will be treated well and will not be burned to ashes like those who refuse and remain. We know you can hear us because some are already coming. We will wait fifteen minutes. Ask for mercy. This is your last chance before this rebellion is extinguished.”

Standing near the inscription, “Chosen from the foundation of the world,” was Camp Rejoice’s leader, Pastor Vince. He faced the people who were lining up to exit the gate and submit to the Global Peace Team. “I beg you, do not believe their lies. There is no truth in anything they say. They are of their father the devil. They cannot hurt us here. If you walk out, you will surrender your right to enter the City of God and to eat of the Tree of Life.”

Still, they left, but no one would look Pastor Vince in the eyes. When hearing their beloved Pastor, others turned back and went inside. A few pushed the Camp's leader to the side. They made their way through the gate then onto one of the waiting GP buses making the biggest, most foolish mistake of their time on earth.

A recorded voice of a young girl was amplified and heard throughout the camp, "Mom, please come out of there. We are treated well. Vince is no leader. His wife, Vivian, says he is a fake. It is a blessing to serve the Peacekeepers. I beg you, don't stay in there and die. Come back and live in peace. We love you and can't bear the thought of never seeing you again. The Peacekeepers have been patient, but their patience is coming to an end."

With that, more came to the gate to have their name stricken from the Camp roster. In all, over one-fourth of the camp's population abandoned the Lord that day. Walking out, sealed their fate as condemned souls. Camp Rejoice wept for days at the loss. After a time of mourning, they praised God that they showed themselves strong in the face of temptation. They did not abandon their faith or their camp friends. It was only by grace that they did not fall for the enemy's lies. The Lord knows those who are His.

\*

*Because of rebellion, the host of the saints, and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did and truth was thrown to the ground.*

*Daniel 8:12*

*When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*

*Mark 13:7:8*

*He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.*

*Revelation 13:7*

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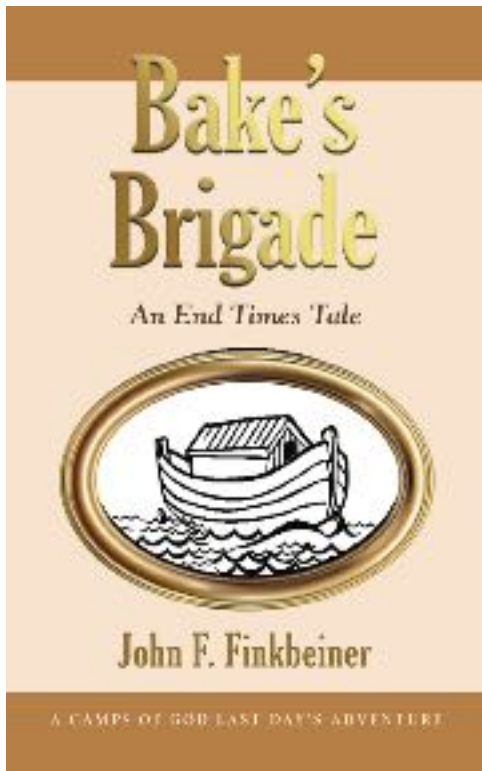
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