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The Promise of God

David Shapiro
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Late one Friday evening a young boy, safely hidden, watches as his mother lights two candles and solemnly places them in a concealed chamber. This secret ritual that traces its origins to thirteenth century Spain will ultimately provide the backdrop to the explosive climax of Shapiro's first work of fiction.

The world is on the brink of war. A new discovery promises to change the balance of global power. At the same time, religious fanaticism abounds, fueled by the belief that the Messiah has arrived. Into this seething cauldron Shapiro places his two protagonists.

Cardinal Issac Benda Cortes is the heir-apparent to the papacy. He possesses a secret that will rock the Roman Catholic Church to its core, a secret that ultimately places him squarely at the crossroads of two of the world's great religions-Christianity and Judaism. It is his personal rubicon, where he is confronted with an overwhelming sense of duty, but to whom?

Grant Tyler, a wealthy media tycoon and avowed agnostic, is convinced that the vision his dying wife gave him, and a word of prophecy from a star athlete, himself recovering from a near-death experience, foretells the imminent arrival of the Messiah. The question is whose Messiah?

From the towers of American industry to the power bases of the Colombian and Sicilian crime syndicates; from the majesty of the Vatican to the humility of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, The Promise of God is a Messianic tale with a difference.

Rich in Jewish theology, this book's theme is at once inspiring and challenging for both Jew and Gentile. Drawing on Orthodox teachings, Shapiro makes the case for the Jewish Messiah while implicating Christianity in centuries of Jewish persecution. Theological perspectives notwithstanding, The Promise of God is an enjoyable book.

Well-developed characters, an action-packed plot, intriguing sub-plots and thought-provoking themes all go to make a full-bodied story.

As The Promise of God races to its conclusion, Shapiro skillfully draws together all the elements for a jaw dropping close. "All over the world, hundreds of millions of people watching reacted in identical fashion. And two brothers separated by seven thousand miles knew their efforts to alter the history of the world and save their people rested on the shoulders of one man, and one moment…the human beacon who would light the path for the world to follow…" (March)

Craig J. O'Connor

CRAIG J. O'CONNOR (February 14, 2000)

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