

Armageddon: The Cosmic Battle of the Ages Study Guide

Armageddon: The Cosmic Battle of the Ages by Tim LaHaye

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Plot Summary

Chloe Steel Williams, her husband Buck, and her father Rayford are among the group of believers who are part of the Tribulation Force, a group of people dedicated to bringing lost souls to God before the Glorious Appearing of Jesus Christ. Chloe and Buck are living in an underground bunker with dozens of other believers as the story opens. They are careful to watch for soldiers of the Global military force who are intent on torturing them to death because of their beliefs and their refusal to take the Mark of the Beast. Chloe discovers a military vehicle near the compound one night and goes to investigate. When she realizes that she's going to be captured, she pretends to be jogging and tries to lead the military to believe she lives farther away.

When Buck discovers that Chloe has been captured, he wants to invade the prison and break her out. However, he is convinced by other members of the Tribulation Force that it's a futile effort that will only result in more people being held. As the story progresses, Chloe knows that she's to be executed and prays only for the strength to endure the death in a way that will bring honor to Jesus. She also prays for strength for her father, husband, and four-year-old son, Kenny. Members of the Tribulation Force are prepared to interrupt the broadcast of Chloe's execution so that the world can't watch her final moment, but an Angel takes care of that, casting a light that's so bright that the cameras are unable to capture the moment.

Buck wants to throw himself into action as he seeks to deal with Chloe's death. They are all counting down the days to Jesus' second coming - known as the Glorious Appearing. Many hope only to survive to see that moment while others hope to begin their lives in the thousand-year reign of Jesus. Buck is assigned a trip to Jerusalem to serve as a body guard for Tsion, a revered teacher who believes he is to be there to reach as many Jews as possible in the hours before the Glorious Appearing. Buck is there when Carpatia - the Anti-Christ - attacks the city. Hundreds are slaughtered in the attack including Tsion and Buck.

Meanwhile, Rayford remains at Petra, a city divinely protected by God, when Carpathia's troops attack. Rayford is acknowledged as the leader, although he depends on others to decide military tactics and handle technology centers. The technology geniuses have managed to tap into communications systems and have watched as Carpathia reveals his plans to attack Jerusalem and Petra. Rayford is piloting a helicopter when the invaders fire directly at him. He doesn't have time to dodge but the projectile passes through him and strikes the enemy forces. Back on the ground, Rayford is headed to provide backup for another group of Petra's defenders when the bombs begin to fall outside the city. He's thrown from his ATV and pleads with God to hasten the second coming as he dies.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The story opens with a prologue from the previous book, "The Remnant." In this story, a young computer genius named Chang Wong is living in New Babylon where he has served as a mole for the Christian group known as the Tribulation Force. Chang is there when the city falls into utter darkness, as is prophesied in the scriptures. The darkness is complete and no one can see anything. Even the light from a fire cannot be seen. The exception is that Christians can see, though they are limited. Chang decides it's the perfect time to escape and he calls on Rayford Steele to help.

In chapter one, Rayford, head of the Tribulation Force, is piloting a plane to New Babylon with the help of Abdullah Smith. They have a passenger, Naomi Tiberias, but Rayford is worried about her presence, knowing that she's very valuable to the work at Petra, a divinely protected city where hundreds of Christians are living. Naomi is a computer genius and is at the heart of an effort to keep the technology base running. That base allows scholar Tsion Ben-Judah's daily Biblical broadcasts that provide hope for millions of believers around the world and has brought many to accept Christ.

Meanwhile, Buck and Chloe are in bed in San Diego when a lookout, George Sebastian, wakes them with news that one of the motion detectors around their compound has gone off. Buck uses the periscope and discovers a group of Global Community soldiers looking around the area. George is a military man and they watch for awhile but decide the soldiers, though near, are not an immediate threat. Chloe convinces Buck to go back to bed while she takes the watch for the remainder of the night.

Back in New Babylon, Rayford watches as people crawl around, literally unable to stand or do anything for themselves. One woman cries out to God to save her. Rayford stops and talks to her. She has the mark of Carpatia, but says she's always known the truth but wanted nothing to do with God. She says she's prayed for an angel and believes Rayford to be the answer to her prayer. Rayford goes in search of food for her but can find nothing. Rayford returns to the woman who says she knows it's too late for her to go to God. Just then the voice of Leon Fortunato, Carpathia's second in command, comes over the loudspeaker announcing that people are to make their way toward the speaker nearest to them and that there will be food and water brought to them.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Chloe is obviously suffering from the time that she's being forced to spend inside in hiding. She points out that she and the other women and children are hardly ever able to venture outdoors. She asks if there isn't a place "in the middle of nowhere" that would provide a safe haven from the Global Community soldiers who are constantly looking for



them. The reader should remember that the story is set in the modern day and that modern technology exists. People have been, by this time in the series, forced to accept the Mark of the Beast. It is visible to the naked eye and anyone who has not accepted it by this point is summarily executed. Those without the mark are not allowed to buy and sell goods, meaning they cannot buy food. The Christians also have a mark but that mark is visible only to other Christians. This makes it possible for Christians to recognize each other but they are not identified to non-believers.

The situation in New Babylon is serious and it's difficult to explain the depth of the issues the people face. The darkness is total. Though a person can turn on a computer and it is operational, there is no light from the monitor. Though gas stoves work and there is a flame that gets hot, there is no light from the flame. Christians can see but it's as if they are looking through muddy water. Colors are distorted. Another important part of this curse is that the people itch and hurt. The darkness is so oppressive and the pain so intense that some of them commit suicide.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

In chapter two, Rayford is in New Babylon and a song recorded from the Carpathian Chorale is piped out repeatedly in order to give people a way to find the loudspeakers where Fortunato promises food and water will be distributed.

Chloe begins her turn at watch, thinking about the response from other believers who live in the underground bunker with them once they learn the Global Community soldiers have been near. There are more than two hundred people living in the bunker in San Diego. Chloe serves as the director of a network of food-sharing cooperatives that provide food for those unable to buy and sell on the open market. Chloe notes that everyone living together in the underground bunker has hopes of surviving until the Glorious Appearing which is estimated to be about a year in the future. Chloe says they are also hoping to make a difference in the lives of Christians and to bring some to believe. It's just after three in the morning when Chloe, using the periscope, begins a scan of the area.

In New Babylon, Rayford listens as Fortunato says pilots have reported the total darkness is confined to New Babylon and that the darkness hasn't affected communications. Some people immediately say they'll head out of the city in the hope of finding "the light." Others point out they could wander around in circles because they have no way of telling where they're going.

Chloe is conducting a very methodical scan when she sees a vehicle. She can't tell exactly what's happening but knows she'll have a better view from a bay door that's located much nearer the car. She puts on gloves and a ski mask so her skin won't give her away. She takes a gun but leaves behind the walkie-talkie so an unexpected transmission also won't give her away. She checks on Buck and their four-year-old son, Kenny, one last time, then heads to the bay to get a better look.

Rayford sees a glow in the distance and makes his way toward it. He discovers it's Nicolae Carpathia who is casting enough light for mechanics to get a vehicle operational. Carpathia can see only a very short distance and Rayford stays out of the circle of light to listen to the conversation. Carpathia reveals that a convoy will soon be headed to Al Hillah. Rayford next goes to Carpathia's office where he sees Carpathia's secretary talking on the phone to her mother. She says she is in severe pain. The woman says Carpatia is holding a cabinet meeting soon and that she has to be in the meeting. She also mentions her Uncle Gregory who is living outside the Carpathian domain but says she doesn't want to know how he's surviving.

Rayford encounters a man who also has the mark of a Christian and who can see in the darkness. Rayford signs to the man to meet him a short time later in the hallway. The man leaves and Rayford talks to the secretary, Krystall. He convinces her he can see.



Krystall asks Rayford if he's a Christian and he confirms that he is. He asks if she's going to reveal his presence and she says with none of Carpathia's men able to see, there'd be no point.

Chapter 2 Analysis

There are people in New Babylon who are angry over the situation with the darkness. Though they don't realize this is the first stage of the curse against the city and that they'll soon be destroyed completely, they do feel that Carpathia should be able to "do something about" the darkness. One points out that Carpathia has claimed to be God and, if that's the case, should be able to provide light. There's an interesting piece of symbolism in this section. People are looking for "the light" and Jesus is often referred to as "the Light." If these people had accepted God and followed him, they would not be suffering in the extreme darkness.

Rayford is near Carpathia when Carpathia is with the men working on the car. Rayford overhears Carpathia say there will be a convoy headed to "El Hillah." Rayford asks why they are going to El Hillah and Carpathia immediately asks who is speaking, indicating he can't see Rayford. Rayford moves to another place and speaks again, prompting Carpathia to turn in that direction. He does this several times and says to himself that, "This could be fun."

Rayford talks to Krystall about her decision to follow Carpathia rather than God and she confirms that she had years to choose to follow God, but that she rejected Him repeatedly. The Scripture related to the ability of the lost to come to Jesus during this time is confusing and Rayford admits that he doesn't fully understand it. He knows those in New Babylon won't have another opportunity to accept Jesus and that even those who now realize their mistake since the woman who pleaded for food and Krystall can't be saved at this point. However, later there will be hundreds saved by Tsion and Buck with literally only hours to go before the Glorious Appearing, the second coming of Jesus.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

In chapter three, Chloe is at the door before she takes time to think through her plan. She knows she can't open the door and leave it open for fear of being detected in the doorway. She decides she'll open the door, step out, and take a look around. Chloe has trained under George Sebastian along with the others living in the bunker. She thinks about that training now and it worries her that she's making a mistake by going outside. She steps out and her eyes quickly adjust to the dim lighting outside. She sees the car, identifies it as a Global Community personnel carrier, but can't tell if there's anyone inside. As she makes her way to the car to check it out, she isn't certain whether she's being foolish or brave.

Rayford discovers the other Christian he met is a German named Otto Wesler who says he lives about six miles away with a group of believers. Rayford takes Otto to Chang's quarters where he and Naomi are working at removing computer equipment. Otto reveals that he'd left his group behind, intent on learning whether there were any Christians in New Babylon. He says he serves as teacher for his people and that he's come to realize they have to leave the region. Rayford and Otto go to Carpathia's office, knowing that Carpathia has called a meeting of his top cabinet. There, Carpathia reveals that Al Hillah is where the world's collection of nuclear weapons are stored. He says he and the top cabinet members will be moving out of New Babylon and setting up a command post at Al Hillah. He says he'll soon begin amassing troops for a major offensive. When someone asks about the people of New Babylon, Carpathia says they will all be left behind. He warns the cabinet members not to say anything about the plan to the people who'll be left.

Carpathia is told a plane touched down on the runway and he plans to go find out the identity of those who arrived as soon as the meeting is over. As the meeting draws to a close, Rayford tells Otto they have to be gone before Carpathia can learn their identities and he rushes for the airstrip. Otto says he won't leave the city without his followers and they make plans to be in touch later. Rayford then runs for the plane.

Chloe makes her way to the vehicle and looks inside to discover the vehicle is empty. Buck wakes and discovers Chloe is gone. He quickly comes to realize she's outside and calls someone to watch Kenny and then calls George to go outside with him.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Otto is described as "effusive" and some of the others don't quite know what to make of him.

One of Carpathia's men dares to speak out during the meeting of the upper cabinet. He says that Carpathia is unable to provide light and that he hasn't the power he's claimed.



Carpathia shouts at him which makes most of the cabinet members shiver in fear. This man is obviously also afraid but he continues to speak out. He dares Carpathia to kill him. Carpathia orders the head of his security team to kill the man but the man says that's a sign that Carpathia isn't able to do the deed himself. Carpathia then kills the man. It's unclear what motivates the man to this length but it seems possible he simply hates the darkness and the pain they are all feeling. It may be that he wants to commit suicide but can't kill himself.

Chapters 4 and 5

Chapters 4 and 5 Summary

In chapter four, Rayford is already aboard the plane when he sees Carpathia on the way across the terminal. Rayford calls his friends Mac McCullum and asks that he send Albie to Al Hillah to determine where Carpathia plans to have his headquarters and get the building bugged so that the Tribulation Force can monitor the happenings there. Abdullah, Naomi, and Chang appear and get on board. Abdullah waits for Carpathia to come near before starting the engines, blowing Carpathia off his feet. Rayford's answers a call from George Sebastian who says they can't find Chloe.

Buck and George had searched until daylight drove them back inside the bunker. Chloe had set out on a loop around the property and was in the middle of that when she encountered two more Global Community vehicles. She quickly realizes they are doing a grid search of the property and that they'll soon find the hiding place of the Christians, including Kenny and Buck. Chloe sets out away from the compound, traveling on foot in such a way that she's certain to be seen, hoping to draw the soldiers away from the hiding place of her friends and family. She dumps the gun and ski mags and pretends to be out for a run. When the soldiers catch up to her, she says her name is Phoebe Evangelista and that she doesn't have any identification. She continues to run, pretending to be innocent and only intent on getting back home. Eventually the soldiers get tired of her evasive answers and uncooperative attitude and take her into custody. She is shoved to the ground and purposely rubs her face on the asphalt, hoping she'll be scratched up enough that she won't be recognized. She quickly begins to pray, asking God to let her be enough of a distraction that the soldiers don't return to their search.

Rayford drops Chang and Naomi at Petra, the divinely protected city where thousands of believers are living, and heads for San Diego to help search for Chloe. Mac says Albie is already headed for Al Hillah and he goes with Rayford.

Chloe is questioned by a guard named Jock. Though she lies about her identity, Jock soon reveals he knows who she really is. Chloe tells him she isn't interested in any deal he has to offer but he tells her the deal he is willing to make will benefit her child.

In chapter five, Albie arrives near El Hillah where he plans to meet with a man named Mainya Mazda, Also known as Double M, who is a known murderer. Albie plans to hire Mainya to bug the headquarters Carpathia will be using while he's in El Hillah. When Albie gains an audience with Mainya, he discovers the man is in the middle of getting a new tattoo. The rumor is that Mainya gets a new tattoo each time he kills someone. He tells Albie that he sometimes gets the tattoo "in advance," indicating he's going to kill someone.



Chloe is being interrogated and realizes she's very hungry. Jock reveals they know she has a child and that they're willing to allow Chloe to keep her child with her in prison for the first years of his life. Another guard brings food for Jock and he teases Chloe with it, pretending he's going to give her some of the food. He tells her she'll be given an energy bar periodically in order to ensure she remains alive until time for her execution.

Rayford calls Krystall during the flight back to San Diego. Rayford promises Krystall they will help her uncle if he contacts them. Then he asks if she's heard any news about "an important arrest in the United States." Krystall confirms that there has been a high-level capture but she doesn't have details.

Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis

There are several details from previous stories that are not fully explained in this book. The person who has read the previous books will know the history between Mac and Rayford. The person without that knowledge will gather that the two are good friends. Albie is another enigma in this book because his past actions are not really explained. Again, the person without that knowledge will be able to make sense of the book but the depth of some characters are not revealed in this book.

Buck is furious when he discovers Chloe has been captured. He wants to rush out and mount a rescue attempt and is even angrier when he can't get others involved in that effort. He's reminded that it would mean almost certain death for the rescuers. At one point, Buck snaps at another member of the team but later apologizes. The promise of life after death is an important theme in the story but Rayford notes that the thought of death is still scary to those facing it and those left behind still grieve for their loved ones.



Chapters 6 and 7

Chapters 6 and 7 Summary

In chapter six, Mainyu and Albie begin their negotiations for the work Albie is requesting. Mainyu says that he isn't loyal to Carpathia but neither is he loyal to anyone else other than himself. They haggle over the price of the job with Mainyu demanding fifty thousand Nicks, the current global currency. Albie counters with thirty and believes Mainyu will eventually give in. Mainyu points out the Global Community will pay twenty thousand for a Christian and that it doesn't matter if that Christian is dead or alive. Mainyu says Albie has thirty thousand in his possession and that his body will bring twenty thousand more, "and we don't even have to do the job." With those words, he kills Albie.

Chloe is starving by this time and is back in her cell when a man walks by. He seems surprised, saying he wasn't aware there was a prisoner in custody. He talks to Chloe for a few minutes and brings the conversation around to the fact that they are in America and that American prisoners deserve the courtesy of a phone call. He offers her his cell, says he'll be back for it soon, and asks that she not tell on him for letting her use it. Chloe calls Rayford. He answers and Chloe tells him to record the conversation and that she has only a few minutes. She says the call is being traced and he'll have to throw the phone away after the call. She tells him she was jogging some thirty miles from their base when she was captured. She then says she remembers their vacation to Colorado and wishes they could return there "as soon as possible." She then tells him to ask that everyone else pray that she's strong to the end and hangs up after saying she loves him.

Back in San Diego, George reassures Buck that Chloe is worth a lot to the Global Community police alive but he refuses to consider a rescue operation because there's so little information. In her Cell, Chloe drops the phone outside her cell, breaking it. The man returns for it and is now rude, making it clear Chloe had been set up as she'd believed. She is later forced to watch a news cast and sees Jock talking about the importance of her arrest. Jock also reveals that another important member of the movement, Albie, shot himself when he was about to be arrested. Chloe is not certain whether Albie is really dead but is devastated at the possibility.

In chapter seven, Rayford and Mac discuss Chloe's message and realize she's trying to tell them something important with the reference to the trip to Colorado.

Chang is welcomed to Petra. He and Naomi go to a spring that supplies the village with water. They're there when the evening's manna arrives and Chang is pleased to find it's delicious and filling. Chang later visits the tech center and then meets Naomi's father, Eleazar Tiberias.



Back on the plane, Mack and Rayford go over Chloe's message and realize she's telling them they have to leave San Diego immediately for Petra.

Chapters 6 and 7 Analysis

Chloe is forced to watch news casts on television and one of them includes the story of the elaborate planning that led to her arrest. Chloe notes that it's all propaganda. There is a lengthy story touting the "investigation" and the fact that Chloe and Buck have "amassed a fortune" through their work on the black market. Chloe does work the black market as part of her efforts to provide food for believers unable to buy and sell on the open market, but she has never made a profit from that. The story also includes a photo of a little boy that the newscaster says is Chloe's son and that he's named "Jesus Savior Williams." The story is that Chloe and Buck are touting their son as the risen savior who "will one day conquer Nicolae Carpathia." The photo is not Kenny. The child is holding a Bible and has on a T-shirt with the words "Kill Carpathia." The news cast ends with the fact that Chloe has already begun giving the jailers information in an effort to avoid execution.

The manna is a divine gift from God provided to the children of Egypt of the Bible when they were unable to provide for themselves. The small wafers fall everyone day and provides all the food needed by the people. The people are to gather only as much as they need for that meal as a testament of their faith that He will provide their next meal as well. Any stored manna ruins before it can be eaten. Naomi points out her own garment as the only piece of clothing that she's owned since arriving in Petra. She says she's been there for several years, that she washes it out each evening and the next morning it looks like new, "like the Lord's compassion."



Chapters 8 and 9

Chapters 8 and 9 Summary

In chapter eight, Chang meets other members of the community at Petra, including Chaim Rosenzweig who is a renowned teacher and Tsion Ben-Judah who is the accepted Biblical scholar. Tsion broadcasts a daily message that provides home to many Christians and has helped many accept Christianity as a way of life. His teachings are also the basis for many of the activities of the Tribulation Force as they seek to do what's necessary while anticipating what will happen next. Chang tells Tsion he is embarrassed and upset because he has the number "30" on his forehead, a mark required by Carpathia to denote Chang's origin, and the line indicating the place where a biochip was inserted. Chang says he wants it removed. Tsion calls together some of the elders and they pray that the mark disappears. When they are finished, Chang is relieved to discover the prayers are answered.

Chloe meets a matron named Florence who offers Chloe her energy bar. Chloe says she wants it but refuses to beg. She tries to force herself to save some of it but can't resist and eats it all. Meanwhile, counselors at Petra are busy answering questions from Christians who want to know about Chloe, including offering reassurance that the news stories are false.

In chapter nine, Buck and George are at the airstrip awaiting the arrival of Rayford's plane. Buck is clearly agitated and still wants to try to rescue Chloe though George says it's still a suicide mission without additional information about the prison. That night, Rayford insists that Buck stretch out and rest though Buck insists he won't be able to sleep. Rayford leaves instructions that neither of them is to be disturbed except for an emergency. Chloe is given another energy bar and admits that dealing with the hunger is going to be extremely difficult. She holds little hope that she'll be rescued and begins to pray that her execution will be quick. Time passes and a matron named Florence seems to connect with Chloe. She offers Chloe a milk shake and Chloe is skeptical but takes it. The shake is delicious but she sips only a few mouthfuls before falling to the floor, drugged.

Chapters 8 and 9 Analysis

Chang's biochip and mark on this forehead is not explained in this book. This is a detail that will remain a mystery to the person who has not read the previous books.

Some historical information is provided through dialogue and other pieces of information provided through narrative. As Chang and Naomi begin to become better acquainted, Naomi reveals information about her background, including how she came to accept Jesus. She says her father had been religious until her mother's death at which time he'd turned away from his teachings and Naomi had followed. Naomi says they'd never



believed that Jesus was the Messiah, a fact that is true of the Jewish community as a whole. Naomi says her mother had come to believe the truth and had urged her father to accept that fact prior to her death. It was that insistence that turned her father away from his religion for a time.



Chapters 10 and 11

Chapters 10 and 11 Summary

In chapter ten, someone knocks at Rayford's door, waking Buck and Rayford. George is there and introduces a Hispanic man named Razor. Razor reports that he'd seen Global Community forces "canvassing the area" but they started a short distance from the compound and moved away. However, Razor also reveals the forces plan to return to the starting point and move in a different direction, meaning they'll soon be on top of the bunker and will likely find it. Razor also says he found Chloe's gun and ski mask near the place she was captured. Finally, Razor says they'd heard the soldiers talking about Chloe and it seems she was being moved during the night. Buck is immediately furious, saying he should have been told because they might have been able to mount a rescue while Chloe was being transported. Rayford says Razor "probably did the right thing" and points out they would have been rushing off in the early hours of the morning with no plan and no clear idea of where Chloe was being moved.

Chloe falls when the drugs hit her system. She's taken by hearse to an air strip and Jock says no one will bother the hearse. Chloe prays for the strength to fight the drugs and hears Jock say they'll be moving north, as near Chicago as is safe. Back in the bunker, everyone is preparing to leave and Buck apologizes when he encounters Razor again.

In Petra, Chang reveals that he's found a way to override the Global Community's broadcast system. He says he doesn't believe the GC will be able to stop him once he cuts into their broadcasts. Meanwhile, Mac McCullum travels to Wisconsin to pick up Gustaf Zuckerman Jr., known to his friends as Zeke, who has a new assignment in Petra.

Chloe gives herself up to sleep once they're on the plane but wakes while traveling the last leg of their trip toward their destination. She tries to think of a plan for escape but can't come up with one. When Jock brings her some food, she prays over it, asking that God protect her from any poisons Jock may have put in the food and that God help her resist the truth serum she knows is part of their plan for her.

In chapter eleven, Mac and Zeke talk about Albie's death. Mac says they are planning to hold a memorial service for Albie once the people from San Diego reach Petra. They also discuss the fact that Otto's people will be evacuated out of Babylon at some point because the scripture indicates that city will also be destroyed. Zeke's role is to create identities for those who will be traveling on their next assignment. This time a group will be planting devices for listening and watching at Al Hillah. They discuss Krystall who has helped with several things since she first met Rayford. Mac says they'd like to help her but says that taking her out of New Babylon with Otto's group is not an option because she, as an unbeliever, won't be allowed to enter Petra.



Chloe arrives at the prison that was once Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois. Jock takes her for a tour of the courtyard where the guillotines are set up. There is a great deal of blood in the yard and Jock says it is never cleaned. The guillotines are also never cleaned which means they occasionally malfunction. The bodies and heads are discarded into dumpsters. When they emerge into another part of the courtyard, Chloe is confronted by reporters yelling out questions. When Chloe tries to yell out that she was drugged, Jock forces her to be quiet and tapes her mouth. When the reporters ask if Chloe has given up information, Jock says she has. Chloe shakes her head no but knows that probably won't be shown on television. That night, Buck learns that Chloe is on television. They watch carefully, trying to find some clue as to her whereabouts, but are unable to decide where she's being kept. The newscasters say she's in Louisiana but Rayford doesn't believe them.

Chloe is left alone in the dark. She continues to pray and suddenly there's a brilliant light in her cell. She soon discovers it's an angel sent by God. Armed with that comfort, Chloe begins to sing.

Chapters 10 and 11 Analysis

Jock refers to the fact that Chicago has been "nuked." Again, this event occurred in a previous book and the reader knows nothing about the situation other than Jock's indication that the region isn't safe.

Buck is worried about Chloe but he is focused on his worry that she'll be decapitated. He believes that to be a "grotesque" way to die and finds himself sick at the thought that fate might befall Chloe. As a matter of fact, Chloe will be beheaded at the guillotine and the event is televised. However, an angel creates a bright light in the courtyard where she's being executed and the television cameras are unable to pick up the image.



Chapters 12 and 13

Chapters 12 and 13 Summary

In chapter twelve, Rayford knows Buck doesn't want to leave for Petra with the others because of Chloe. Rayford announces that he'll be remaining behind as well. They won't make a move unless they can figure out where Chloe is being held, but they will remain in the States in case they get information. Jock administers truth serum to Chloe. While Jock is trying to make Chloe talk, the angel is in the room and Chloe remains calm but unmoved by the truth serum.

Mac telephones Otto Wesler who has been helping Krystall function in the oppressive darkness of New Babylon. In return, Krystall has allowed Otto to listen in on conversations and Mac now knows there's to be a gathering in Baghdad in six months' time. There's to be a new building constructed for the purpose of establishing Carpathia's new headquarters. Carpathia plans to reveal "a final solution to the Jewish problem." A time for Chloe's execution has been set and the story is she's in Louisiana. Buck and Rayford consider going there but feel they are either being led into a trap or that the information is false. The execution is to be televised. Chang is going to allow the broadcast for the moments leading up to Chloe's death to ensure the people watching can hear any final words she has but plans to interrupt before the actual execution. Rayford calls Krystall and asks that she find out where Chloe is really being held. In exchange for that information, Rayford tells her New Babylon is to be destroyed and she has to leave the city.

In chapter thirteen, Krystall never calls and Rayford finds out she's been murdered. Chloe continues to be comforted by the angel who says his name is Caleb. He promises she will be delivered but not rescued. Chloe is forced to allow a woman to comb her hair but she refuses to allow the woman to put makeup on her. Chloe is then led into the yard where others are also to be executed. One woman tells Chloe she's afraid and Chloe leads her to Christ. Soon after the first execution, Caleb appears. He is sixteen feet tall and stands between Jock and Chloe. His light is so bright people have trouble seeing.

Chapters 12 and 13 Analysis

Chloe knows she's going to be executed and she prays a great deal about her final moments. She asks God to help her remember the Bible verses she's memorized and that He will give her the right words to say at the appropriate time. She also prays that she won't give anything away when Jock is questioning her. She notes that she feels the effects of the drug but she doesn't answer any of his questions with any information that will put her family or friends in danger. When the session is concluded, Jock says he's amazed at her ability to withstand the questioning.



Chapters 14 and Interlude

Chapters 14 and Interlude Summary

In chapter fourteen, Chang watches the appearance of the angel from his place in the tech center at Petra. Buck telephones Tsion, asking if the angel could be there to intervene in Chloe's execution but Tsion assures him this is not likely the case. The angel is pleading with the unsaved to repent. Buck is angry and says it is within God's power. Tsion urges him to accept God's will. Jock falls when the angel appears. When he gets back to his feet, he tries to make it appear as if he doesn't believe the angel is real. Jock determines to go on with the executions. When the first Christian is about to be beheaded, Chloe closes her eyes, determined not to watch as her fellow Christians are put to death. However, Caleb's light puts an end to anyone seeing the actual executions.

The executions go on anyway and Chang watches with Naomi and the others at Petra. Jock tells lies about Chloe's capture, saying she'd provided them with a great deal of information in an effort to save herself from being beheaded. Jock says he'll allow Chloe to speak only if Chloe agrees to receive the Mark of the Beast. Caleb appears in front of Jock and motions "no" with his finger. Chloe begins to speak. She says she loves her husband and son, and admits that she's afraid of the physical death but looks forward to being in the presence of God. She continues, quoting scriptures and ending with a promise to Buck that she'll be waiting for them to join her in Heaven. She then puts the microphone on Jack's chest where he is still lying on the ground, and walks to the guillotine, placing herself for the execution.

The next chapter is titled "Interlude." Buck arrives in Petra with the others, reeling over Chloe's death. Tsion holds a memorial service for Chloe and Albie. He reminds them he'd lost his own family and urges that they cling tightly to God in their grief.

Chapters 14 and Interlude Analysis

Jock has to make a serious effort to rally the viewers during the televised broadcast of the executions. He tries to pretend he's more afraid than he is, apparently hoping to provide some comic relief in the face of an obvious divine intervention. Then Jock points out that the Christians are still going to die, despite the presence of the angel. Several of those are about to be executed because they have refused the Mark of the Beast pray and become Christians. Chloe notes the appearance of the mark of Christianity on their foreheads after the angel appears.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

In chapter fifteen, the time is six years, five and a half months, into the Tribulation period. A man named Lionel Whalum takes over Chloe's role in the food cooperative. Chang learns the government is hiring a private contractor to dire the new government offices for sound and a group that includes Rayford and Buck are put under cover to do the job, complete with false identities that pass GC inspection. They add cameras and bugs that will allow them to monitor everything from the tech center at Petra. Tsion broadcasts a plea for Christians to stand strong against increased demands and promises anyone who needs help safe passage to Petra.

In chapter sixteen, Carpathia conducts more tortures and executions to those without the mark. One day the group at Petra watches as Carpathia's advisors from around the world gather for a meeting. Leon Fortunato, the Most High Reverend Father of Carpathianism, introduces Carpathia. At the conference table are the leaders who are recognized by Rayford and the others watching. There area three men Rayford doesn't recognize and Chang says they seemed to "simply appear" in the room.

Carpathia reveals his plans. He says all the world leaders are to gather their troops in a single location. From there, two-thirds of the troops will attack Jerusalem and one-third will attack Petra. Carpathis says he'll ensure victory this time and that nothing will be left to chance. Carpathia says the attack will take place in just a few months and urges that members of his cabinet begin immediately.

Carpathia then introduces the three "men" at the end of the table, saying they have been with him since the beginning and that they witnessed the lies told by God. Carpathia and Fortunato bend down so they are face-to-face with the men. Three "froglike beings" leave the mouths of Carpathia and Forunato, entering the mouths of the seated men so that they become animated, all three becoming very much like Carpathia in appearance. Chaim and Tsion begin teaching about the Biblical prophecy they are seeing, reading from Revelations 16. The scripture teaches that "unclean spirits like frogs" will be the spirits of demons, and that their role will be to gather the earthly rulers together to prepare for a great battle. The final passage read by Chaim is the statement that the soldiers gather "in the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

There is a lengthy speech by Carpathia during the meeting of all the world leaders in chapter sixteen. During this speech, Carpathia admits to being the Anti-Christ. He says he would have been Christ except that he wasn't there first. He says he was ordered to serve humans who were created in the image of God, and that if Carpathia had just been there first, he would have been the one being worshiped. Carpathia also insists



that everyone is a product of evolution and that God lies by saying He created people. Carpathia says he was cast out when he dared question God, which is ironic because Carpathia has killed several members of his followers when they questioned him.

There's an interesting comment by Carpathia who says God the Father and God the Son thought they were doing the world a favor by putting everything into a book for the humans to read. However, Carpathia says he has read the book himself and that he's prepared for what God will throw his way.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

In chapter seventeen, One evening Tsion tells Rayford he plans to go to Jerusalem in the final hours before the Glorious Appearing. Tsion says he'll teach those who will do battle in the final days what to expect according to the scripture and that he plans to train as a soldier in preparation for this trip. Rayford is initially opposed, saying it's too dangerous, but gives in and agrees he'll send Buck with Tsion. Tsion predicts one of the next major events will be that the Euphrates River dries up, making it easier for the armies from the east to arrive at the designated meeting place. Tsion predicts the destruction of Babylon will be the next major event followed by the fall of Jerusalem. Tsion says the Glorious Appearing of Christ will be soon after that.

Chapter eighteen begins six years, eleven months into the Tribulation period. Rayford continues to be worried about Tsion but Tsion assures Rayford he will be protected by God in Jerusalem. They also discuss the need to protect the borders of Petra. Though the city is impregnable, no one who arrives seeking refuge is safe until they are inside.

Chang is at the computer when the Euphrates dries up in a matter of a moment. Meanwhile, Carpathia calls all his peacekeepers away from their assignments to join the military buildup, meaning those hiding because they don't have the Mark of the Beast can come out. Mac heads to New Babylon to evacuate the believers and Rayford plans to fly Buck and Tsion by helicopter to Jerusalem. Tsion asks to be let out near the Wailing Wall. Rayford says it's too dangerous but gives in when Tsion says the "Day of the Lord is at hand." He tells Rayford he doesn't need to be worried about his safety because God has commanded that he be preaching by the time the enemy attacks. When Rayford points out the multitude of people in the clearing near the Wailing Wall, Tsion tells Rayford to land, insisting the people will clear out and give them room.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

The mere presence of Kenny, the son of Chloe and Buck, is mentioned repeatedly but the reader does not know what his fate will be or his role in the thousand-year reign of Christ. Chloe says there were some who thought she and Buck were wrong to bring a child into the world at this time but she said that was a personal choice they deliberately made. There are others who marry during this period or who make plans for their lives during the thousand-year reign. Chang and Naomi are among those making plans. They want to marry but have been convinced they should wait until the thousand-year reign to do so. When everyone is preparing for their roles in the battle, Chang feels guilty that he's remaining inside the walls of Petra where it's safe. Though he has work to do and has spent years in danger as a mole in the GC headquarters at New Babylon, he feels that he should be doing more for the coming battle. Naomi says she wants him to

survive the hours until the Glorious Appearing so they can live the next thousand years together. The events of that period are part of the final book.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

In chapter nineteen, Tsion points out to Buck that there are many without the Mark of the Beast walking the streets of Jerusalem freely now that the GC soldiers have gone. Tsion says goal is to bring as many to Christ as possible before the Glorious Appearing. He also applauds the young men who are seeking a way to defend the city. When Buck points out that Tsion's teachings say the city will fall to the enemy, Tsion agrees but says the more who survive the attack, the more who will be alive to enter "the kingdom." Tsion and Buck hide for their first few minutes, then Tsion simply walks to the Wailing Wall and begins to teach. Tsion begins to talk about the Messiah and the need for repentance, directing people to Buck for help. Buck explains that Jewish people may feel accepting Jesus as the Messiah is contrary to their teachings but points out that it's only building on what they've always known. Tsion talks about the fact that Jerusalem will become the capital during the thousand-year reign. It is the only city that will be spared destruction in the form of a huge earthquake and hailstones. Thousands accept Tsion's teachings and are converted.

Rayford decides to fly over the plains where Carpathia's army is gathering and he's awed by the sheer number of soldiers. He estimates it will take a full day for the army to march to Petra but not very long at all for them to reach Jerusalem. When he returns to Petra, Rayford spends time with Kenny before returning back to his duties.

In New Babylon, the appearance of an angel makes it apparent it's time for believers to leave the city. They have two planes filled with people and are safely in the air when the invading army attacks, destroying the city.

In chapter twenty, Buck calls out, asking for food for Tsion though Tsion wants only to continue preaching. Someone brings cheese, bread, and oranges and Tsion realizes he was very hungry. Tsion urges everyone to prepare for the coming attack but to also share the news of what they have learned.

Buck and Tsion go to the home of a family who have accepted Jesus. The mother of the family says none of them accepted the Mark of the Beast but that she'd decided she would so the family would have someone who could buy and sell. However, she came to realize the truth and was converted before she could do so. She is thankful the rest of her family has now been converted, thanks to Tsion's teaching at the Wailing Wall.

Tsion asks Buck to go with an old man to help ensure he reaches one part of the city. Buck is reluctant, preferring to stay with Tsion, but gives in. The battle begins and there are soon many casualties.

At Petra, Rayford and George are discussing options considering they are faced with such a huge contingent of military. They come up with a plan to hit the front line of



soldiers, mounted on horses, with a "directed energy weapon." The idea is to burn the horses so they run out of control, causing other horses to also bolt and creating chaos. George and Rayford decide to fly above Petra in the helicopter so that George can get a better look at the overall picture. They are in the sky when a warhead whizzes directly at the chopper and Rayford knows he can't possibly dodge it.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

George is in command of the troops that surround Petra in a token effort to defend the city. The reason they are to protect the borders of the city is convoluted and confusing but they set out to do so. The city is divinely protected and it seems they could simply wait inside the safety of the city. When George says he's worried about those outside the protection, Rayford points out this is to be the first site of the Glorious Appearing and that they might be the first to see Jesus.

Rayford was married to a woman named Irene when the believers were taken to Heaven at the beginning of the series. He later married a woman named Amanda and he now wonders if the reunion with the two women will be awkward or if things like that won't matter because they are in the presence of Jesus.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

In chapter twenty-one, the missile passes harmlessly through the helicopter and crashes into the enemy troops. Rayford suggests they go back up and let the enemy forces fire at them again but neither man is actually willing to test God to that point. In Jerusalem, Tsion is being carried along by a wave of people and Buck eventually catches up with him. They find a place to hide and remain there for a short time. Buck asks Tsion how much longer he believes they'll have to hold out. Buck says he wants to be alive when Jesus reappears and Tsion says he wants that as well. There's a lull at both Petra and Jerusalem and Tsion refers to a scripture in which it's prophesied that horses will be confused while riders will be mad and blind. Carpathia issues an offer of peace at Jerusalem but the people respond with gunfire. Tsion and Buck are soon caught up in the heavy fighting and Tsion is wounded. Buck tries to get him to safety but Tsion's wound is severe and he dies. Buck lets Rayford know. Rayford asks if Buck needs to be picked up but it's hopeless. Back in Petra, Mac asks if Rayford can join him at the opposite side of Petra.

In chapter twenty-two, Rayford begins the trip on an ATV, stopping off in the city to talk to Chang for a few minutes first. As he begins the descent toward Mac, he's thrown from the ATV by a mortar exploding. Rayford knows he's mortally wounded but tries to hold onto his temple to staunch the flow of blood. He's there when he dies. In Jerusalem, Buck is hit and knows almost immediately that the wound will be fatal.

Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

The descriptions of the battle are thorough, giving places and military strategies that some readers may find monotonous.

The story is the eleventh of a twelve-part series and the reader who is expecting the story to come to some conclusions will be disappointed. Several of the main characters are dead by the time the story comes to an end and the cities of Jerusalem and Petra are in apparent danger. The reader knows Tsion's teachings and the beliefs of those who have been anxiously awaiting the coming of Christ, but those events do not occur in this book.



Characters

Chloe Williams

Daughter of Rayford and wife of Buck, she is also the mother of four-year-old Kenny. Chloe is a strong Christian who is also an important leader of the Tribulation Force. Carpathia has banned trade and purchases for anyone who doesn't have the Mark of the Beast but Chloe is the person who organizes a huge supply network, providing food to those who have refused to take the Mark. Chloe is dedicated to her family and friends and it's this dedication that leads her to make foolish decisions that ends in her capture and death. Chloe is trying to save Buck from his turn at watch and it's while she's keeping an eye out for intruders that she sees the Global car and leaves the compound alone. When Chloe is in prison, she prays constantly for strength and depends on God to help her survive the torture. When she's about to be given truth serum, she knows she won't be able to withstand the questioning on her own and prays for help. Chloe knows that without God's help, she will reveal information that would lead to the capture and murder of dozens of her friends and family. When the angel appears to Chloe, she accepts immediately that it's a sign from God and takes comfort in the presence. When her execution is inevitable, Chloe prays that God will give her the words to lead others to Christ. She calmly goes to the guillotine and an angel appears, blocking the view of the thousands who hope to witness her death.

Buck Williams

Buck is Chloe's wife and Kenny's father. Buck was a journalist prior to the appearance of the Anti-Christ and he continues to use his talent though he is now seeking to bring others to Christ and to encourage them to study the word of God. Buck is a serious man and is dedicated to his family and friends. When Chloe is captured, Buck wants to storm the prison to free Chloe though others tell him it would be a suicide mission. When Buck comes to accept Chloe's fate, he is quick to apologize for having been rude to others while he was so upset. This is an important aspect of Buck's nature. Buck is a studious man and seeks Tsion's understanding of the scriptures as they relate to the second coming of Jesus. Buck is assigned the task of guarding Tsion in Jerusalem and he sets out to do so, grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the action as a means of taking his mind off Chloe's death. There, Buck tries to protect Tsion but accepts his role in Tsion's work as that of minister to those who want to accept Jesus in the final hours before His return. Buck is with Tsion when Tsion is killed and relates the news to Rayford who is still at Petra. Buck is at the Wailing Wall when Carpathia's forces break through the outer walls of the city. He's killed there.



Rayford Steele

Father of Chloe and grandfather of Kenny, Rayford is the acknowledged leader of the Tribulation Force. Rayford is a strong man who is dedicated to his family and friends and puts them second only to God. Rayford seeks God's will in all his actions and studies a great deal in order to determine what he's supposed to be doing in the various situations. Rayford's kindness is seen in his reaction to the people who are hurting when he first lands in Babylon. Rayford wants desperately to help them all. Without the ability to help everyone, he wants to help at least one of them and puts himself in danger in his effort to get food for a woman. Rayford feels uncomfortable in his role of leader when faced with strong, learned men such as Tsion. This humble aspect of Rayford's nature makes others look up to him almost as much as his natural leadership ability. Rayford is thrown from his ATV when a bomb hits nearby and dies as a result of his injuries.

Tsion Ben-Judah

A rabbi who has come to understand that Jesus is the Messiah, Tsion is teacher of millions who tune into his daily broadcasts. He is also the accepted expert with regard to all things related to the scripture. Tsion is in Petra as the story opens but reveals that he's being led by God to go to Jerusalem for the final battle before the Glorious Reappearing in order to bring as many Jews as possible to accept Jesus prior to that event.

George Sebastian

A young man who has military training, George is the person who is typically in charge during military situations. George is calculating when it comes to planning and executing military maneuvers. He is among those helping defend Petra against Carpathia's attack and his fate is unknown.

Chang Wong

A young computer genius who is in Babylon when the city goes dark and who goes to Petra to continue his work there. Chang has the Mark of the Beast on his forehead when he arrives at Petra and he pleads with the elders to help him pray for its removal. It is removed and Chang is grateful. Chang is attracted to another young computer tech named Naomi and they plan to be married after the Glorious Reappearing.

Naomi Tiberias

A young computer genius who goes with Rayford and the others to Babylon to help Chang escape. Naomi and Chang are soon involved in a relationship and plan to be married after the Glorious Reappearing.



Nicolae Carpathia

The Anti-Christ, he has proclaimed himself God during this time and is the leader of the Global Community. Carpathia admits to members of his cabinet that he's the Anti-Christ. Carpathia seeks to eliminate the Tribulation Force and to control the entire population, forcing them to worship him as a god.

Leon Fortunato

Carpathia's right hand, Leon is clearly the False Prophet. Leon is completely under Carpathia's control and does whatever he's told.

Albie

A young man who has worked on the black market, he sets out to hire a leader in the underworld for a job bugging a Global building. Albie is summarily executed by the man and his body sold to the Global forces for a bounty.

Jock

A prison guard who is in charge of questioning Chloe, Jock claims to the world that Chloe's arrest was the result of a successful campaign to capture her and that Albie killed himself rather than be arrested during that same drive to capture Christians. Jock is amazed when Chloe is able to withstand the truth serum without giving away her family's location. Jock stands up to the angel who appears in the courtyard when Chloe and others are being executed for their refusal to bear the Mark of the Beast.



Objects/Places

New Babylon

This is the city that falls into darkness and is then destroyed.

San Diego

This is where Chloe and Buck live with more than two hundred believers until they are transferred to Petra after Chloe's capture.

El Hillah

This is where Carpathia reveals the entire world's cache of nuclear weapons is being stored when he and the members of his cabinet prepare to move there.

Petra

This is the name of the city where the believers live and are divinely protected by God.

Euphrates

This is the river that dries up in a matter of minutes as part of the prophecy of the second coming.

Jerusalem

This is the city Carpathia wants to take as his headquarters and where Tsion and Buck die.

The Wailing Wall

A sacred place to the Jewish people of Jerusalem, this is where Tsion begins preaching and is where Buck dies.

The Glorious Appearing

This is the name used to describe the second coming of Jesus. The Glorious Appearing does not occur in this book.

Manna

This is a food provided by God for the people of Petra.

Guillotine

This is the machine used to execute Chloe.



Themes

Belief in Jesus and the Second Coming

The belief that they are living in the end times and that Jesus will soon return is the basis for almost all the action of Chloe, Buck, Rayford, and others living in the Christian community. They have all refused to submit to the Mark of the Beast required by Nicolae Carpathis though it means they could be put to death. They believe accepting the mark will damn them to Hell. With the knowledge that Jesus will return in short order to cast non-believers into Hell, Tsion and the other Christians are frantically trying to bring people to Christ. They all know time is running out and that for many, it is already too late to accept. The knowledge that she'll soon wake in Heaven is the reason Chloe is able to calmly accept her fate at the hands of the Global Community police. It's also the reason that she leads a woman to accept Jesus in the moments just before they are both executed. That knowledge is also what comforts Rayford and Buck as they deal with their grief over Chloe's death. Tsion's belief leads him to travel to Jerusalem though he knows the city will be destroyed and he will be in danger there. His goal is to bring as many as possible to Christ in the hours leading up to the second coming. Tsion preaches and teaches in the city right up to the moment of the attack and then continues to work to tell people that Jesus will soon arrive and that their only hope for a future is to repent and recognize him as the Messiah.

Christian love

The love of Christians for each other, for Jesus, and for mankind in general is a recurring theme and is seen from the opening pages of the book. As Rayford and the others arrive in New Babylon, they discover the people there are in agony. Rayford wants to help them even though he understands their agony is the result of their having refused to accept Jesus. Rayford also meets a young woman in New Babylon named Krystall. He warns her that the city will be destroyed. Though he knows he can't save her, he believes he might be able to prolong her life. Another example of this Christian love is seen in Chloe's actions. When the GC police are on the verge of discovering the bunker where dozens of Christians are hiding, Chloe puts herself in danger to draw the attention away from the hiding place. When Chloe is about to be executed, she admits to being afraid but she puts her own fears aside to lead several to Jesus. Tsion is yet another example of this theme. As Tsion counts down to the final hours before the second coming, he knows there are many Jews in Jerusalem who are not saved but who could be. He puts himself in danger and dies there in his effort to help some of them come to accept Jesus. There are other examples in the daily lives of the Christians. For example, when Chloe is killed, others step in to help care for her young son, Kenny.



Prophecies fulfilled

The fulfilling of prophecies is a theme seen throughout the book and one that is used by both the Christians and the Anti-Christ. At one point, Carpathia admits outright to his cabinet that he is the Anti-Christ and says that God felt he was doing mankind a favor by writing down the events that would happen in the end times. Carpathia says the problem with that plan is that he has read "the book." Carpathia seems to believe he can somehow change what's been prophesied and that knowing what's going to happen gives him the power to change it. Tsion is the person who repeatedly evaluates and predicts the fulfillment of prophecies throughout the series. It's Tsion who says the Euphrates River will dry up, and that prophecy comes true. When the three men arrive at Carpathia's cabinet meeting and come to life after Carpathia and Fortunato cough up demons that go into the men, Tsion realizes this is the fulfillment of another prophecy. Yet another prophecy that's seen fulfilled during this book is the massing of Carpathia's troops in preparation of the attacks on Jerusalem and Petra. The main prophecy being expected by the Christians is the second coming of Jesus, referred to as the Glorious Appearing. That prophecy is not fulfilled in this book. However, Christians know that event is mere moments away as the action of this book comes to a close.



Style

Point of View

The story is presented from an omniscient perspective though there are some limitations. These limits are seen most with the deaths of the characters. Each character believes his or her death will be followed by uniting with loved ones in the presence of Jesus, but what happens to individual characters after the moment of their deaths remains a mystery. The omniscient perspective is the only option available to the author because the action occurs in various places around the world, with various characters involved, and several of the characters die. The thoughts and prayers of individual characters is seen throughout the story, putting the reader in the position of knowing the motivations behind specific actions. An important example is seen when Chloe goes outside to check out the presence of Global military forces. She wants to protect Buck from loss of sleep and so puts herself in danger to keep from waking him. As she reaches the door, she wonders if she's made a mistake but doesn't turn back. When she knows she's about to be captured, she does her best to protect her friends and family. Rather than running toward them for help, she leads the soldiers away from the compound, hoping the other believers hiding there will remain safe for at least a short time longer. The omniscient perspective is appropriate and acceptable for the story.

Setting

The story is set around the world in the modern day time. The majority of the overall settings are real though many of the specific settings are fictional. For example, it's noted that Chloe, Buck, and a group of Christians are living in an underground bunker in San Diego, California, prior to Chloe's arrest. The city is real but the bunker may be a figment of the author's imagination. An important setting is the city of Jerusalem. That city is important in Biblical stories and in Biblical prophesies. Buck and Tsion are there just prior to the Glorious Appearing - or the second coming of Jesus. There are mentions of several gates to the city and places within the city that actually exist. One of those is the Wailing Wall. This is where Buck is just prior to the ending of the book. The city of Petra is another important setting. That city also actually exists though not in the form seen in this book. In this book, the city is divinely protected and inhabited by thousands of believers awaiting the Glorious Appearing. In the city of Petra, there are several specific settings mentioned, including a spring that provides water for the community and the center that houses the computer services vital to the work of the Christians. Another important setting is the city of New Babylon, named for the Biblical city where the people attempted to build a tower to get nearer Heaven. That city is where Carpathia or the Anti-Christ is when God casts a darkness so complete the light from a fire is swallowed up and doesn't even cast a glow.



Language and Meaning

The book is the eleventh of a twelve-part series. The overall story line follows a group of non-believers as they come to realize their loved ones have been taken to Heaven and their subsequent acceptance of Jesus. The story is the epitome of good versus evil in that there is a group of Christians who are battling the Anti-Christ in their efforts to bring others to the truth. The story is written in a straight-forward manner. Because this is the eleventh, there are a few references to previous books that some readers may not fully understand. While this book is theoretically a stand-alone story, readers should have at least an understanding of the basic premise of the story line in order to understand what's happening. The characters include Biblical scholars and there are several people in the book who freely quote scripture. There are many passages of scripture included in the book and these are reasonably direct quotes to modern day versions of the Bible. It should be noted the authors have interpreted scripture used in the story and that not all theologians agree with these interpretations. The story is divided between dialogue and narrative. The dialogue is reasonable for the story and characters. The narrative drives some of the story but there is a significant use of dialogue. A reader with an average vocabulary will have no trouble understanding the story.

Structure

The story is the eleventh of a twelve-part series about the end of time, the Rapture, and the second coming of Jesus. Known as the "Left Behind" series, the books are about the group of people were not Christians when the Christians were called to Heaven but who come to believe and fight for God as Satan attempts to control the world. The story is divided into twenty-two chapters. Because the story is the eleventh of a twelve-part series, there are aspects of the book that may be confusing to readers who have not read the previous ten books. The reader who expects a tidy ending will be disappointed. As the book comes to a close, many of the main characters die and there is no resolution to the battles that are taking place in Jerusalem and Petra. The story is presented roughly in chronological order but there are events taking place at various places at the same time. The author handles this by splitting scenes with the icon used in the series, a partial circle with eleven of the twelve segments highlighted. For example, chapter twenty-one begins with Rayford having just survived a missile fired at his helicopter. At the end of that brief scene, the icon appears followed by a scene in which Buck is searching for Tsion in Jerusalem. At the end of that scene, the icon appears again and the story returns to the action at Petra.

Quotes

"Rayford knew the prophecy - that people would reject God enough times that God would harden their hearts and they wouldn't be able to choose him even if they wanted to. But knowing it didn't mean Rayford understood it" (Chapter 1).

"As many of you may know - and if this is news to you, I expect full confidentiality - Al Hillah is the location of our vast storehouse of nuclear weaponry, voluntarily surrendered to us by the rest of the world as a condition of my accepting my position" (Chapter 3).

"Well, you can play high-and-mighty all you want, Mom, but I'd think you'd be open to hearing me out when the benefit to you deals with your own child" (Chapter 40).

"If I were to bear the mark of the one to whom I am loyal, it would have to be the number 1" (Chapter 6).

"Chang stepped back, looked up, and extended his arms as the skies seemed to snow bits of soft bread that covered the entire area. Below, the million strong emerged from their quarters with jars and baskets, and gathered what they needed for dinner" (Chapter 7).

"Sad as it is, she made her decision, took her stand, and accepted the mark. Getting her out of New Babylon just keeps her from dying in that mess when God finally judges the city" (Chapter 11).

"Misguided but impressive. That's the problem with religious extremists" (Chapter 12).

"As she knelt and laid her head under the blade, Caleb's glow blinded the eyes of the world. Chloe heard only the pull of the cord and the drop of the sharpened edge of death that led to life eternal" (Chapter 14).

"We have thousands of Internet counselors who can answer any question and lead you to Christ. We also have teams of rescuers who can transport you here if you are being persecuted for the sake of Christ" (Chapter 15).

"I've quit trying to figure out God, Tsion. I'm surprised you haven't" (Chapter 18).

"Only temporarily, and the more of these people we can keep alive, the more can come into the kingdom. That's all I care about" (Chapter 19).

"What say we bounce back up and see if we can get them to shoot at us again, maybe take out some more of their munitions on the other side? Not funny, Rayford" (Chapter 21).



Whatever he did, he could not take his hand from his temple, and he dared not land on one more hard thing. 'Lord, now would be a most appropriate time for you to come" (Chapter 22).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Rayford Steele? Who is Chloe? Who is Buck Williams? How are the three connected? What are their roles in the story? What are their fates?

Who is George? Chang? Naomi? Krystall? What is the role of each in the story? What are their fates?

Describe the Christian beliefs that are important in this story. What do you consider the most important? Why?

What is Petra? New Babylon? Jerusalem? El Hillah? What is the importance of each in the story line?

Describe the story line. What are the beliefs that are important? Who are the main characters? What is expected to happen after the book ends?

Compare Krystall to Chloe. What happens to the two women? How are they similar? How are they different?

Describe the battle that occurs as Jerusalem is about to fall. What is happening at Petra at the same time?

List at least three prophecies that are fulfilled during the story. How are they fulfilled?