

Desecration: Antichrist Takes the Throne Study Guide

**Desecration: Antichrist Takes the Throne by Tim
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Plot Summary

The novel "Desecration: Antichrist Takes the Throne" is the ninth book in the Left Behind series. The series tells a fictionalized story of the final days of the earth based on information given in the Christian Bible. This particular book focuses on the escape of the believers to the safety of Petra after the antichrist, Nicholae Carpathia, desecrates the temple and forces the people to worship him. Themes discussed in the novel include faith as well as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

The action of this novel starts just after four members of the Global Community have faked their deaths in a jet crash so that they can work actively with the Tribulation Force. This group of Christians has been building an airstrip in the Negev desert to bring in supplies for the group after they lead the Christians in Jerusalem to the city of Petra, a place where God has promised the Christians will be safe from the antichrist.

Meanwhile, Carpathia is forcing the people to worship him and take a mark of loyalty to him. He is preparing to tour Solomon's Temple, which has been restored as a temple to Carpathia. As people begin getting the mark, they are also struck down with a plague of boils, a sickness that weakens Carpathia's forces. In addition, Orthodox Jews and Christians as well as those who are still undecided are offended by Carpathia's desecration of the temple when he both murders a man in the temple, then slaughters a pig in the Holy of Holies. Chaim, who has been chosen to lead the people out of Jerusalem, takes a stand against Carpathia and tells him that the only way his people will be cured of their boils is to let the people of Jerusalem go to Petra before he starts killing people for not taking the mark. Although Carpathia goes back on his promise to Chaim and sends out military forces against the Christians, God keeps these Christians safe.

Chloe, head of the Tribulation Force's commodity co-op, discovers a group of Christians living in Chicago who are willing to join with Chloe's group. David Hassid, a computer engineer and important part of the Tribulation Force, is killed by two stray GC troops as he waits for the Christians to begin arriving in Petra. Three Tribulation Force members are killed in an ambush during a rescue mission gone wrong in Greece. As the novel closes, Chloe and Hannah are sent to Greece to attempt to rescue George Sebastian who is kidnapped during the failed rescue mission. While all of the Israeli believers have been safely transported to Petra they are once again threatened as Carpathia's forces plan to demolish while Tsion, the spiritual mentor of the group, visits the city.



Prologue and Chapter 1

Prologue and Chapter 1 Summary

The novel "Desecration: Antichrist Takes the Throne" is the twelfth book in the Left Behind series that tells a fictionalized story of the final days of the earth based on information given in the Christian Bible. This particular book focuses on the escape of the believers to the safety of Petra after the antichrist forces the people to worship him. Themes discussed in the novel include faith as well as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

The prologue is a section from the novel The Mark the book that precedes Desecration in the Left Behind series. Buck has just let Rayford know that the empty Quasi has crashed on the shoreline. Four people were supposed to have been on the jet. Buck prays for each member of the Tribulation Force as he drives to Jerusalem. He is part of a group that plans to rise up against the Antichrist, Nicholas Carpathia.

In Chapter 1, although information has been planted in Global Community computers that an airstrip near Mizpe Ramon is part of a GC operation, Rayford is afraid that his group will not be able to hide the airstrip from the GC. At the airstrip, Albie introduces George Sebastian, a new recruit, to Rayford. George has ready to follow him a shipment of weapons although Rayford says their group won't use them. Meanwhile, David Hassid, Leah Rose, Hannah Palemoon, Mac McCullum and Abdullah Smith lie in wait in a rented van. All except Leah are presumed dead by GC from the Quasi crash in Tel Aviv.

In Chicago, Dr. Tsion Ben-Judah, who the spiritual mentor of the Tribulation Force, prays for Chaim Rosenzweig. Chaim's part in the operation is to play a modern day Moses, a part that he is resisting. Tsion's prayers are interrupted by a computer message from Chang Wong. Chang has had the mark of the beast forced on him and wants to kill himself. He is afraid he will be of no use to those in the Tribulation Force because of his doubts. Tsion begs Chang to wait twenty-four hours before doing anything but to continue to fight his temptation until the two can talk further.

George shows Rayford and Albie samples of the weapons that he can get them. Although Rayford agrees the weapons are impressive, he argues that he does not have combat troops. Meanwhile, Buck visits Chaim at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. As Buck tries to encourage Chaim, he forms his words in English, but they come out in Hebrew. He orders Chaim to take a glass of water. The water in the glass turns to blood when Chaim takes it. He also discovers that he is able to paralyze Buck with just a motion of his hand. Even with these signs, Chaim still questions if there is not another person whom God could send. Buck knows there is no one else.



Prologue and Chapter 1 Analysis

Since this novel is part of a series, it is difficult to pick up the book and read it as a stand-alone story. A brief excerpt from the preceding book in the series is included as a prologue to this novel but the story still seems to start in the middle of the action. Also difficult is the writers' tendency to switch back and forth quickly between scenes that are taking place in different locations at the same time. There are three of these abrupt transitions during the first chapter of the novel alone. Although the writers do give clues as to what is going on, it is a struggle to keep up with the mass of characters, locations and plots all being introduced in a short span of time especially since all these characters seem to be in the middle of some action unknown to the reader.

Through information in the Prologue and first chapter, it can be pieced together that Rayford and his group have faked their own deaths so that they can become part of a group that will rise up against Nicholas Carpathia, the Antichrist. Although they have just begun their efforts, the group is already ragtag with one member (Hattie) missing, Chang is contemplating suicide and Chaim is begging God to send someone else in his place. It can be deduced that Chaim is to act as a modern day Moses to lead the believers in Jerusalem to the city of Petra where they will be kept safe from the Antichrist. It is also Chaim's responsibility to convince the Jews to convert to Christianity so that they too can take refuge in Petra.

Faith becomes a major theme in the novel along with the power of God to work through people who may not seem capable of the jobs they have been given. In this section, both Buck and Tsion are concerned that the older Chaim will not be able to carry through his job of leading the Christian Israelis out of Jerusalem. Even Chaim doubts his own abilities. As Buck prays with Chaim in their hotel, several things happen that Buck can attribute only to God. First, Buck begins speaking in Hebrew to Chaim, a language that Buck does not know. He is also able to give Chaim two signs to show the Israelis that he has been sent by God. Chaim's ability to change a bottle of water to blood and paralyze a person are things that Buck had no prior knowledge that Chaim would be able to do.

Use of weapons becomes another central theme in this story. George offers Rayford the use of a shipment of weapons that will be coming in as soon as the airstrip can handle them. Rayford does not appear interested in these weapons. In fact, he tells George that he is not in the market for these weapons. Rayford appears to be determined to get what needs to be done completed without the use of force on his part.



Chapters 2 and 3

Chapters 2 and 3 Summary

In Chapter 2, Mac sends Chang a stern warning that they don't have time for his doubts. He challenges Chang to complete his work for the group, then see what he can find out about the circumstances surrounding his marking. Meanwhile, Buck and Chaim join the masses lining the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem where Carpathia is expected to make an appearance. The two stop to watch television coverage of the Quasi accident and see that it is being blamed on pilot error on the part of Mac.

David and his group are reunited with Rayford and the others at the airstrip. David sets up his computer so that he can watch a feed being sent to him by Chang detailing Carpathia's movements on his plane. During the feed, Reverend Fortunato makes several trips to the restroom and is obviously uncomfortable. Suhail Akbar and Loren Hut, the new Morale Monitor Chief, are allowed to meet with Carpathia. Carpathia imagines that Hut is being disrespectful to him and mocking him. Hut's voice begins to sound scared as Carpathia describes the way that Hut should kill those who do not have the mark of loyalty. Reverend Fortunato tells Carpathia that the pig is in place and Moon comes in to discuss the tour schedule. Fortunato, still in obvious pain, shows Carpathia his newly tattooed mark of loyalty.

In Chapter 3, Hattie kneels in prayer in her hotel room. She becomes aware of the angel, Michael, standing in the room with her. She sends a message to Tsion telling him of her assignment to confront Carpathia the following day. Meanwhile, Rayford explains to his group their role in escorting the believers to safety. At the same time, Buck and Chaim watch Pilate's court for action. When the motorcade does arrive, Buck notices the Most High Reverend Father is nursing a spot on his backside. During the ceremony, Viv Ivins introduces Fortunato who leads the crowd in singing. Carpathia gets out of his vehicle to greet the crowd. A drugged pig wearing a saddle is brought out of a trailer. Carpathia mounts and rides the pig.

David watches Carpathia's spectacle on television as he travels by helicopter to Petra. The crowd cheers when Carpathia and Fortunato finish their walk down the Via Dolorosa and stand on Cavalry. Carpathia asks the people to prove their loyalty to him by getting their marks that day. There is sudden silence and Buck notices a woman, whom he recognizes as Hattie, pointing at Carpathia and Fortunato. She calls them liars and false prophets. Fortunato points at Hattie and a ball of fire comes down and destroys her. Buck is angry with Chaim, telling him that should have been one of them. After this, Fortunato goes ahead of Carpathia supposedly to prepare for Carpathia's presentation at the temple. The Tribulation Force group learns that he is actually being treated for a rash and boils.



Chapters 2 and 3 Analysis

In order to understand the significance of what is happening in these chapters one needs to have some knowledge of the Bible. What Carpathia is doing is re-enacting Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion as well as His appearance before Pilate. People greet him with palm branches just as the residents of Jerusalem did when Jesus Christ, whom they believed to be their savior, entered the city of Jerusalem a week before he was crucified. Because Carpathia is Christ's opponent, the anti-Christ, he chooses to make a mockery of this walk. As the Germans who stand in front of Buck and Chaim at the "celebration" indicate, Carpathia riding the pig is an offense to all Christians, and particularly the Jews, because the pig was one of the animals that was considered unclean by the Jews.

Meanwhile, Chaim has been called to be a second Moses. In the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, Moses was the person who originally led the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land. Like Chaim, Moses felt as if he was not capable of doing the job that God had given him. Like Chaim, Moses is also given signs to show the people that he is sent by God. Unlike Moses, however, Chaim is not given an assistant to help him with his job. Because he is the only one of Jewish descent who is available to do the job, Buck knows that he must do it, but feels no confidence in the elderly professor.

In this section, Hattie sacrifices herself to stand up for her beliefs. Buck doesn't know what Michael has revealed to Hattie, and assumes that it should have been Chaim standing up to Carpathia instead of Hattie. On one hand, Hattie's actions make her a martyr for those believers in Christ, but because Fortunato is able to destroy Hattie, this could be seen as a show of power on Fortunato's part.

Throughout these chapters, Fortunato has been obviously uncomfortable. He has been running to and from the restroom to have to keep from scratching in front of Carpathia. Note that Fortunato has just gotten his mark of loyalty and shows it to Carpathia. At the conclusion of these two chapters, it is discovered that Fortunato is suffering with boils.

Also described in this section is the way that the believers are getting supplies even though the Global Community refuses to do business with them. Chloe, who is Buck's wife, heads a group called the International Community Co-op. She has brought together the personnel for Operation Eagle all while taking care of her and Buck's son Kenny. She lives in a safe house in Chicago.

Faith as well as its antithesis, fear, are important themes in this novel. Chaim struggles with his fear as he tries to prepare himself for the job that God has assigned to him. Similarly, Hattie, a young believer accepts her assignment willingly and seems to do her duty with no fear. As Buck escorts Chaim through Jerusalem, he also is fearful that Chaim will not be able to do the job that he has been given. Buck's lack of faith and subsequent fear leads him to second-guess Chaim's actions and wonder if the man should be doing something when he is instead staying quiet. One example of this comes when Hattie stands up to Carpathia. Buck does not know the whole story behind



Hattie's outburst and assumes that it was actually Chaim's responsibility to speak out against Carpathia.

One thing that should be noticed in this section of chapters is Carpathia's absolute disregard for people and their feelings, even those who are on his own staff. For instance, Hut is scared and sickened by the way that Carpathia orders him to kill those who refuse to take the mark. Also, although Fortunato is obviously suffering, Carpathia shows no sympathy for the man but instead is almost making fun of his condition. The only person that Carpathia really seems to care about is himself. When he senses that Hut is making fun of him, for instance, Carpathia becomes angry with the man for his lack of respect. He is angered to the point that he almost loses control.



Chapters 4 and 5

Chapters 4 and 5 Summary

In Chapter 4, as Tsion and Chloe watch the action in Jerusalem, Tsion receives Hattie's e-mail message. David ignores the message as he is reading Chang's pieced together account of the day when the mark of the beast was forced upon him. Chang has learned pleaded not to have to take the mark and professed a loyalty to Christ. Meanwhile, Rayford calls Tsion to confirm that it was Hattie who was killed by Fortunado. He talks to Chloe who admits she is jealous because Hattie was able to take an active role in the opposition.

Back in Jerusalem, Buck goes inside the Garden Tomb. Chaim walks in after him, crying. The guard, who turns out to be the angel Anis, speaks to the two. Chaim considers this a sign from God. He goes to a souvenir shop and buys a cheap replica of the container in which the Dead Sea Scrolls had been found. He fills the container with ashes from Hattie's body and tells Buck they must get to the Temple Mount.

In Chapter 5, at Petra, David gets a message from Tsion reminding him the next event on the prophetic calendar is Carpathia's desecration of the temple. He switches to watch the scene at Temple Mount where GC personnel and civilians are lined up to receive their marks. Also at Temple Mount, Buck and Chaim search for other members of the opposition. The two men are offended by the people who bow, pray and worship the golden image of Carpathia. As they listen, a voice emanates from the idol telling the people that not all of them are dedicated. Most people bow. Chaim and Buck do not. They notice lines of believers at the edges of the crowd. As the crowds continue to wait for their marks, Buck wonders why Chaim is not taking a stand and speaking out.

In a show of loyalty, the top military brass take their marks, then worship the image. Carpathia tells the crowd that he will continue to watch as the people are marked. Buck tells Chaim they need to go back to the hotel, but Chaim says he feels called to stay at the temple the rest of the night. Before Buck leaves, Chaim requests that Buck call him Micah from that point forward.

Chapters 4 and 5 Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that Carpathia begins to act as a tyrant as he insists that all the people get the mark of loyalty and worship his image. Notice that Carpathia stresses that these actions are not optional. He begins a campaign to pressure the people into doing as he asks by indicating that he will be watching throughout the night as they get their marks. A guillotine, which Carpathia and his people refer to as a "loyalty enforcement facilitator" stands ready for those who refuse to take the mark as instructed. Remember that the mark of loyalty is the same of the mark of the beast mentioned in the Bible. Those who have this mark will not be allowed into heaven.



Also during this section of the novel, Chaim seems to have a breakthrough. He and Buck are in the Garden Tomb when the angel Anis speaks to the two of them. After this meeting, Chaim collects Hattie's ashes in a small urn, and then returns to the area where people are being sealed with the mark. Although Buck thinks it would be best for Chaim to go back to the hotel and rest, Chaim says that he feels called to stay and monitor the markings.



Chapters 6 and 7

Chapters 6 and 7 Summary

In Chapter 6, David expects people to begin arriving in the city of Petra in about 24 hours. In Chicago, Tsion has Ming and Chloe read over a message, which describes how Carpathia's desecration of the temple was forecasted in the Bible, that he plans to put on the Web site. Ming tells Tsion that she believes Chang can cut into the GC's television feed and counter Carpathia's message with a message of his own. The two ladies also point out that Tsion mentioned Petra by name in the message as the place of refuge for the Christians. Meanwhile, Buck prepares to go back to the Temple Mount. Once he finds Chaim, Chaim tells Buck that he is ready. People are still standing in line to take the mark but there are few members of the GC present because they are suffering from the plague of the boils. Chaim walks away from Buck and begins speaking in a voice so loud that Buck has to cover his ears. He tells the people gathered about the prophesy in the Bible forecasting the curse of the boils. Chaim demands an audience with Carpathia. A female guard tries to shoot Chaim but Chaim paralyzes her. Chaim grabs a walkie-talkie and repeats his request to talk to Carpathia.

In Chapter 7, David is awakened by the sound of heavy equipment at Petra and knows that the GC has been monitoring the Tsion's Web site. David wonders how God will protect them. Meanwhile, Tsion is inconsolable about his slip. Zeke makes the point to Tsion that God is too powerful to let one man mess up his whole plan. At Temple Mount, Hut is sent to deal with Chaim and Buck. Like other GC members, Hut is scratching and miserable from sores. Meanwhile, the action switches to Chicago where Zeke calls for Chloe and Tsion to watch what is happening with Buck and Chaim. They watch as Hut aims his gun at Chaim at point blank range and fires, but Chaim is not injured. When one man accuses Hut of shooting blanks, he takes a shot at the man, killing him instantly. He then presses his gun against Chaim's forehead and pulls the trigger, but Chaim is again unharmed. He gets a gun from a female guard and puts it to his own chin, but Chaim stops him.

Buck hears the sound of chopper blades as Carpathia is brought to the site. He tells Buck he must either get the mark or be killed. The guard assigned to him falls to the ground, writhing in pain from his sores. Carpathia acknowledges that Chaim is in some way responsible for the sores on his men. Chaim tells him that it is God who has brought on the plague. At Petra Rayford, Mac, Smitty and Albie begin to devise a plan to keep the Israelis safe, but argue whether or not they should consider killing the GCs. Meanwhile at temple mount, Carpathia tries to make a deal with Chaim to have the plague of the sores gone. He warns Carpathia that the coming plague will be worse than the one now being suffered by the people. He asks for water, which turns to blood. When Carpathia demands to have his people healthy and the water pure, Chaim tells him that he must let those people who have professed belief in Christ go free before he begins punishing those who have not taken the mark of loyalty. Orthodox Jews are also to be allowed a gathering place where they can be safe from Carpathia. Meanwhile,



David scopes out the GC presence at Petra. Four vehicles are loaded with weapons by members of the group and driven to strategic spots. They hope to be able to frighten away the enemy without having to kill any of them.

Chapters 6 and 7 Analysis

One aspect of Chaim's acceptance of his job that confuses Buck is Chaim's request that he be called Micah. Buck reads the book of Micah hoping that he will find some clue as to Chaim's name change. He cannot find any similarities between the Biblical character and his friend. Often, however, when Biblical characters are touched by God, they change their name to indicate this change in their spiritual nature. Notice also, that the names Chaim and Micah contain the same letters in different orders.

One of the points made in this section of the novel is the architecture of Petra. It was built out of stone thousands of years before it was to become a refuge for Christians fleeing from Carpathia's wrath. In years past, the city of Petra had been a perfect fortified city because of its high rock walls, with modern technology, including planes and bombs, David realizes that Petra could become a place of death if the people are not protected by God.

When Chaim begins prophesying, one of the first things that he speaks of is the fact that the plague of the boils was forecasted in the Bible. He talks about the way that these boils are caused by the worship of Carpathia and the taking of the mark. He tells people plainly that the pain that they are in is being caused by the displeasure of God.

One of the miracles in the book is the transformation of Chaim. He indicates to Buck that Carpathia will be brought out if he causes a ruckus, a situation that Buck feels the older man is not capable of making. He is surprised when the small, elderly man draws up and speaks in a voice so loud that Buck must cover his ears. Buck is surprised that Chaim appears taller and sure of himself as he sets his jaw and gestures with balled fists. During his encounter with Carpathia's guards, God protects Chaim from being injured by Hut's bullets. Chaim is also able to paralyze one of the guards, and turn a bottle of water into blood as signs of the power of God.



Chapters 8 and 9

Chapters 8 and 9 Summary

In Chapter 8, Chaim testifies to those who have not yet taken the mark of loyalty, promising them that there is still time for them to be redeemed. Meanwhile David and his group go over their plans to each shoot two rounds from the big guns with the DEW being used afterwards to irritate the sores of any GC that have not already fled the area. Meanwhile in Jerusalem, Chang worries that loyalists will catch on to his masquerade if he does not get the sores so he calls in sick, pretending to be afflicted with the plague. At Temple Mount, Buck is surprised when dozens of people come forward to pray with Chaim. Chaim tells the new believers of the plans to keep them safe at Petra. Chaim also speaks to the old Jews who have been worshipping at the Wailing Wall and now approach him. Buck works a plan with Chloe to have Chaim's image and words appear on the televised broadcast of Carpathia's defilement of the temple. Meanwhile, Carpathia appears at the temple with his followers who are carrying a throne and dragging the pig from the day before. Chaim taunts the man, asking why he cannot heal his own people if he is indeed God.

In Chapter 9, Carpathia yells at a volunteer camera assistant to obey him and make the Jewish priests leave the temple. Carpathia finally shoots the man for refusing to kill the priests. It is at this point that the feed changes to Chaim. Chaim points out that Carpathia has just defiled the temple by committing murder there. Those protesting Carpathia's tour of the temple begin gathering and shaking their fists at his actions. Before the camera feed switches, Chaim speaks of the laver where priests would clean their hands and points out that this washing will not cleanse Carpathia. When the camera does switch back to Carpathia, he has the blood of the assistant on his hands. More priests rush in, horrified that Carpathia has killed in the temple. He orders that from that point on, the only sacrifices made in the temple will be made to him. Chaim's feed breaks in again and he begins to describe the way in which Carpathia's actions have been forecasted by the Bible.

In Petra, David watches the television coverage of Carpathia's tour of the temple. The people outside the temple fall on their knees and tear their robes when Carpathia enters the Holy of Holies. He slashes the throat of the pig in the sacred chamber. As he watches Carpathia's antics, David wonders how anyone could take Carpathia seriously. The people begin rioting when Carpathia orders the image of himself be taken into the Holy of Holies. Carpathia comes out to try to calm the people. The angry mob realizes they have cornered Carpathia. They threaten to kill him but Chaim warns them that it is not time for him to die yet. He tells those gathered they need to be out of Jerusalem before Carpathia unleashes his anger. He orders Carpathia to let the Christians and Jews go. The crowd splits to allow Carpathia go to Knesset. Chaim tells the believing Christians they should go to Petra while Jews and the undecided should go to Masada. He and Buck then



follow Chaim toward Knesset. Meanwhile in Chicago Chloe has asked Zeke for binoculars but instead he gives her a high-powered telescope.

Chapters 8 and 9 Analysis

Information in Chapter 9 gives the reader a hint of how Carpathianism came to be. It can also be deduced from this information why the members of the Tribulation Force were once members of the Global Community. This explains why these people had faked their deaths at the beginning of the novel in order to get out of the GC. Originally, a faith had been created by Carpathia as a one-world faith that supposedly incorporated all of the tenets of all the faiths. From other information offered in the novel, it appears that it was Chaim who killed Carpathia, who then was resurrected from the dead in some way. It was at this point that the people were encouraged to focus their worship on Carpathia and Carpathianism was born.

Throughout Carpathia's tour of the temple, Tribulation Force members arrange for a broadcast of Chaim to interrupt Carpathia's feed. Chaim hopes to explain to those watching how Carpathia is fulfilling Biblical prophecy by his actions in the temple. It is not only the information that Chaim gives the people but also Carpathia's own actions that make some people realize how foolish they have been in following Carpathia. Carpathia defiles the temple by murdering a man in it. If this murder had not offended the people badly enough, Carpathia also defiles the temple by killing a pig in the Holy of Holies. Note also that Chaim has an easier time approaching Carpathia and also speaking to the people wanting his information because the majority of the GC leaders are sick with the boils. This leaves Carpathia relatively unguarded as he has his escapade in the temple.



Chapters 10 and 11

Chapters 10 and 11 Summary

In Chapter 10, Buck and Chaim are taken to a conference room with Carpathia, Moon and Fortunato. Carpathia finally agrees to concede with Chaim. As the two leave, Carpathia warns Buck that his days are numbered. Meanwhile in Chicago, Chloe uses the telescope to search attempt to find and identify a light that she had seen across the city several days ago. Back in Jerusalem, Buck and Chaim plan to head to the Mount of Olives, then on to Masada to check out the crowd. Chaim knows that Carpathia will not keep his promise to let the people flee without pursuing them and is curious to see what sort of punishment God has in store for the non-believers. Meanwhile, Rayford phones Tsion to express his concern for the people and their safety in the dangerous situation in which they have been placed. He does not want to have to use force or kill in any situation.

Although they are still suffering from the plague, Carpathia pulls his forces together to go after the refugee Christians. Hut, who feels and looks horrible, addresses Carpathia twice without referring to him by his title of honor. As Hut continues to argue with Carpathia about Micah, Carpathia takes a gun and shoots him. Moon asks if going after the believers will make the plague come back, Carpathia only makes fun of him and insists that they must attack while all the people are together in one region. It is also noted that there are two people who are missing in action after the Tribulation Force attacked at Petra.

At the Mount of Olives, Buck and Chaim watch as people fill the area. Their plan is to rush people from this holding spot to Petra as soon as they accept Christ and receive His mark. Meanwhile, Rayford flies people into Petra, he radios to the others to ignore the curfews set in place by Carpathia and to take any defensive action necessary against his forces. The other men working with Rayford beg him to allow them to have arms to protect the people but Rayford still hesitates. He allows them to have the non-lethal DEW's after getting counsel from the others.

At Petra, David is antsy and ready to be part of the action. Late in the afternoon he hears footsteps and sees two Global Community troops. The noise he makes dialing his phone attracts their attention and they aim their weapons at him. As he tries to duck for cover, David injures his ankle. When Rayford answers David's call, he hears only the sounds of boots on rocks along with David's cries for help. David is able to feel blood rushing from his head. The two Global Community soldiers press their weapons to his chest and pull the triggers. Rayford hears all of the commotion on his phone including the sounds of a body being lifted and dropped over the side of a mountain. Although he is worried about his friend, Rayford also realizes the dangers that could come from David's phone falling into the wrong hands.



In Chapter 11, Rayford calls Hannah and Leah to tell them there is a situation at Petra. To Leah only, he explains what might have happened at Petra. She also tells Rayford the computers and phone could put them in jeopardy. Rayford calls Chang who takes care of David's phone and computers from his apartment. Chang tells Rayford the soldiers who attacked David were probably left over forces from the Tribulation Force's earlier attack. At the airstrip, Tribulation Force members load their helicopters with weapons in order to secure Petra. Rayford and Leah prepare a chopper to go to Petra to check on David before the others are brought in. The men land their helicopters and prepare a foot walk into the city. Leah is to look for David while the men search for any GC troops that might be left in the city. Leah spots the two men first and signals Rayford and Albie. As a helicopter approaches, the two men train their weapons on it. Leah tells them that she has found David's phone, along with lots of blood and a trail leading over the side of a ridge. Leah suspects whoever was hurt there is dead, but isn't positive it was David.

Chapters 10 and 11 Analysis

The use of weapons again becomes an issue as Tribulation Force members fear that David has been attacked by GC troops at Petra. Rayford still argues against the use of weapons, but the others argue that they need some way to protect themselves. They believe they are facing a siege by members of the GC as they try to get the people into Petra. The weapons issue may be one of faith as Rayford may believe that the people need to trust God to protect them without turning to lethal forms of protection. The others, however, seem to think they need a back up plan. This feeling of the need for a back up plan may indicate a lack of faith in the ability and willingness of God to protect his people.

Carpathia's personality continues to develop as he shoots the hurting and irritated Hut for not referring to him by his title of honor. Carpathia also snaps at Moon when Moon asks if the plague of boils will come back if they go after the Christians. Carpathia is one of the only GC leaders who has not been struck with the plague so he has little sympathy for those who have been suffering. His only goal is to get revenge on the people who have embarrassed him, showed him and are trying to turn his people against him. His idea is that even in their weakened state, his people can level the Christians as they will all be together at Petra.



Chapters 12 and 13

Chapters 12 and 13 Summary

In Chapter 12, Hannah is pleased that the Israeli believers are low maintenance. Back at Petra, Rayford and his people are in a position where Rayford is the only one with a clear shot of the two GC troops. He watches the men. When it is clear, he allows Leah confirms the dead man is David. Rayford aims his weapon at the two men. He forgets to plug his ears and is deafened by the noise from the gun. When he and the others check the bodies, Rayford is sickened and overcome with remorse for shooting the two men. Mac reminds him that the two men had killed David and were drawing their weapons on a helicopter full of refugees. As soon as the bodies are disposed of, the signal is given to come into the city with the refugees. Hannah tells Rayford that he cannot fly until he can hear but he argues that she can hear for him.

Chang is careful about who he tells about the death of David. They have all agreed that Chaim and Buck do not need to know about the murder until Chaim is finished with his work. Chang has gotten a message from his mother telling him that his father is upset about Carpathia's actions in the temple. She also shows interest in Chaim and wonders how he had known what was going to happen in the temple beforehand. About 8 p.m. Chaim speaks to the people at Masada. Again, Buck is astonished by the authority in Chaim's voice and words as he tells them about the true risen Messiah. Meanwhile at the airstrip, Rayford decides to stop watch there with the input of Abdullah and George. As Rayford lays in the floor of the helicopter as they make their way away from the airstrip he worries that he is so fatigued already with his mission not even finished. He wonders if God had arranged for his deafness to give him a chance to rest.

Buck is thrilled as Chaim's preaching brings the crowd at Masada to its feet. Thousands pray the believer's prayer with Chaim. Thousands of others, however, search for rides back to Jerusalem. When Rayford's chopper arrives at Masada to transport Buck and Chaim, Rayford sees a third man standing with them. Although no one else seems to be able to see this man Rayford finally speaks to him directly. It is the angel Michael who tells Rayford that he has been sent to heal and restore Rayford.

In Chapter 13, the crew on Rayford's helicopter prepares for a hit after it is contacted by a GC helicopter. Meanwhile, Mac is having fun driving toward Petra. He notes that these vehicles don't stop despite the stumbling blocks the GC forces put in their way. As they drive, Leah expresses concern to Mac that Hannah does not need to go to Petra, the place where David was killed. Back in Rayford's helicopter, the bullet shot by GC forces goes straight through without damaging the plane. It does hit and destroy a GC helicopter. Michael appears in the helicopter, this time to all of them, asking why they are so afraid. Meanwhile, on the road, Mac gives Hannah a pep talk. He tells her that while they are all grieving, they cannot allow their grief to endanger their mission. Back in Rayford's helicopter, those on board decide to continue to monitor the situation, but move to a less conspicuous place.



In Chicago, Tsion prepares for a television message. It will be a message to encourage believers sent as a prologue to Chaim's message. They decide to leave a clock on the wall in the camera shot, but change the time to Carpathia time and blur it so that those looking for clues to Tsion's location will think that have found something. As Mac is pursued by the GC, he requests permission to use his gun but Rayford denies this request. Mac first tries to out drive the GC, the does a u-turn and falls in behind them. Back in Carpathia's plane, those gathering for a meeting realize that Tsion has hacked a feed into their television station. When Moon tries to explain to Carpathia just how badly things are going on the front, Carpathia gets a gun and shoots the man's hands. He demands that the refugee believers be killed and Petra leveled. As Carpathia continues to rail, Fortunato notices that all of the water and ice on the plane has turned to blood. As he listens in his apartment, Chang notices the water from his faucet has also turned to blood.

Chapters 12 and 13 Analysis

In these two chapters, the Tribulation Force suffers a great loss when they discover the murder of David. David was the group's major computer guru and was responsible for helping the Christians get settled in once they began arriving in Petra. David's loss is especially hard for Hannah as she had been close friends with David. Leah is afraid Hannah's grief for David will keep her from being of any use to them if she goes to Petra, the place where David died. Mac gives Hannah a pep talk in which he reminds her that David didn't stop working or let his grief get in the way, even when he saw his fiancé killed.

In this section, Rayford experiences his own miracle. He is discouraged and sickened when he has to shoot the two GC troops in Petra. This was an especially hard for Rayford because he has been so against the use of weapons from the beginning. However, he is put in a position where he is the only one who has a clear shot of the two soldiers who both murdered David, and were, at the time they were shot, training their own guns on a helicopter full of believers bound for Petra. When Rayford shoots the high powered rifle, he forgets to put in earplugs so he deafens himself in the process. As the leader of the Tribulation Force, Rayford is angry with himself for already being so worn out so close to the beginning of the mission. He wonders if his deafening was a way for God to allow him to rest. In reality, this deafening turns out to be a way for God to show Rayford his true power. He sends the angel, Michael, to not only heal Rayford's hearing, but to also strengthen and rejuvenate him for his mission.

Another noteworthy incident in these two chapters is the beginning of the transformation of Chang's parents. His mother has been e-mailing to him even though her husband has been strictly against the Christian views. Now that he has seen what a spectacle that Carpathia has made of himself, Chang's father is beginning to wonder if he made the right choice. Chang's mother also shows increased doubt in Carpathia. She is also amazed that Chaim was able to correctly forecast what Carpathia was going to do.



Chapters 14 and 15

Chapters 14 and 15 Summary

In Chapter 14, Mac slams on his brakes as the GC vehicle ahead of him disappears into a huge cavern that has opened up in the ground. Two peacekeepers who roll out of the vehicle just before it plunges over the edge shoot at Mac's vehicle, but somehow their bullets kill them instead of the members of the Tribulation Force. Rayford calls to tell Mac that Tsion is being broadcast on the television. He also tells him that the GC helicopters are hitting only one another in their attacks. Meanwhile, Chang is overjoyed when he learns that the GC are not able to knock Tsion's broadcast off the air. In the midst of all this, Akbar tries to console Carpathia with the news that two escaped teenaged prisoners from Greece have led them to the hotel room where Micah and his sidekick were staying. They have identified the sidekick as Cameron Willimas, who once worked with Carpathia. As Chang listens to the discussions, he deletes the mentioned names from GC files. Soon news comes to Carpathia that all of the drinking water nationwide as well as all of the seas have turned to blood. Once they discover the deleted files, they realize they have a mole, or spy, getting information from them. Carpathia demands that everyone be given a lie detector test.

Back at his apartment, Chang purposefully crashes his computer and hides his data in a buried auxiliary hard drive. Meanwhile in Chicago, Chloe continues to try to determine the source of the strange light that she has been seeing. She becomes convinced there are other people living in the city. At his work the following day, Chang is put in charge of recording deaths from the water disaster. His boss also informs him that Moon is dead. The story being told says that the Indian stewards from Carpathia's plane killed him. He also warns Chang that everyone will be getting lie detector tests.

In Chicago, Chloe again sets up the telescope to try to find the light. She calls Buck and learns he is in Petra. Buck excitedly shares his news until she realizes she is not as excited. Chloe tells him about David's death. They mourn his loss, not only as a friend but for his role in the Tribulation Force. Chloe tells Buck that she wants to go on the next mission but he is worried about who will watch Kenny. She argues that they cannot send Tsion into the fight as so many people depend on him. Buck counters by saying that they believe Tsion will be protected by God but aren't sure if that protection includes the other members of the Tribulation Force as well. After their conversation, Chloe arranges for Zeke to watch Kenny so she can go out for a walk. She asks Zeke not to tell anyone she is gone. Back at Petra, three groups of GC ground forces are headed toward the people moving into the city. Abdullah believes the forces intend to pressure the fleeing people into the Siq, which can only hold so many people, before attacking them. Rayford tells Buck they may have to use arms against the forces. Buck asks to be left out of any weapon work.

In Chapter 15, Chloe begins her walk through Chicago in search of the light. Meanwhile, in the helicopter, Rayford discusses with Chaim the options they have to keep people



trying to refugee into Petra safe. Chaim says that it cannot be done without a miracle from God. In order to be on the defensive, Rayford has Operation Eagle people armed and on alert. He begins to tell Chaim what happened to David when the action switches to Chang. At work, he is using his speed typing skill to put code into a hidden window of his computer. He is in the process of building a formatting a hidden drive that he will be able to access from anywhere. At Petra, the people are looking in awe at something near the entrance of Petra. Meanwhile in Chicago, Chloe has finally reached the source of the light that she has been seeing. She tries to stay in the shadows as a video camera sweeps the area. She notices that the light goes out. She moves closer to the building and the light comes back on. The camera follows her movements. Finally, a voice from a monitor asks her to identify herself.

Rayford and Chaim see that it is the angel Michael who has caught everyone's attention at the entrance to Petra. He speaks to the people and reminds them of the promises of God. As they listen, they are filled with peace. Back in Chicago, Chloe has to convince the people she has found that she is not radioactive while they have to convince her they are all believers. Those who gather at the door want to let Chloe in, but Enoch is called to make the final decision. In Petra, the believers stand their ground against the GC forces even as these soldiers bear down on them with tanks and weapons. As they fall to their knees, the ground opens up a mile wide trench all around Petra and the refugees. The troops fall into this chasm, which closes after them. Afterward, Chaim asks the people to pray and thank God. Back in Chicago, Enoch agrees to let Chloe in. As they talk, Chloe learns there are 31 believers staying in the building. In Petra, Rayford rushes his workers to get the people into Petra. He tells the other Tribulation Force members to be prepared to go home to Chicago to get Tsion so he can speak to the people.

Chapters 14 and 15 Analysis

Chapter 15 seems to be especially difficult to read as the action switches back and forth between Chloe's walk through Chicago and the advance of the GC forces on the city of Petra. Both of these two sequences are ones that could change the lives of those in the Tribulation Force. Chloe is out alone in a city that is supposed to be vacant because of radiation. She has no idea what sort of people whom she might face if the light source turns out to be from people. Meanwhile, the new believers are being threatened by GC forces before they have even been allowed to enter the city of safety. The build up of each of these stories is frustrating as the authors switch to the other location just as it is believed the action is about to resolve. Although this is not the end of the novel, it is perhaps the most climactic part of the book that actually resolves in the course of this book. Although there are other plots and problems developed later in the novel, these plots are not resolved in this book.

Unfortunately, Chang alerts GC forces to the presence of a mole when he deletes the names of Cameron and Chaim from GC files when he learns that they have been identified. This is a problem because Carpathia demands that everyone be given lie detector tests in order to find the mole. In preparation for any investigation that the GC

might do of his home, Chang purposefully crashes his hard drive so that those who investigate him won't learn that he is connected with the Tribulation Force.



Chapters 16 and 17

Chapters 16 and 17 Summary

In Chapter 16, Chloe tells the group who she is and that she is connected with Tsion. When she finished, Enoch takes her hand and tells her they are hungry. Chloe offers them food and says she will find places for them to work in the co-op. She invites them to tell their story before the action switches to Laslos Miklos whose business had become a front for the Greek underground church. Because his wife and others were killed in a raid during a meeting Laslos did not attend he now lives underground and in guilt. One morning he is awakened by Marcel Papadopoulos whose parents Laslos knew from his church. He was drug out of the raid and allowed to live, along with a female teenager.

In Petra, efforts continue to get the people in and settled. Meanwhile, on his computer Chang learns that he will have a random visit at 8 p.m. His computer screen also flashes with a message that Figueroa wants to see him. Meanwhile, Enoch describes to Chloe the church they had attended called "The Place." It was a church for people who had led questionable lives, but now were saved. In Greece, Laslos calls Rayford to let him know that Marcel is with him. Rayford agrees to pick up the teens if Laslos can get them to Crete. Rayford calls George and asks if he can get the teens to Chicago on the way to San Diego. Meanwhile, Chang prepares for his inspection. He is watching television when the Peacekeepers walk into his apartment without knocking.

In Chapter 17, the Peacekeepers tell Chang they need to search his apartment. Lars, a man from Chang's office, has come to administer the lie detector test. Another of the Peacekeepers finds Chang's laptop. Chang tells Lars he crashed the computer's laptop and asks is there is any way he can get his information back. He also tells Lars that Figueroa had promised to do Chang's test himself. Lars calls Figueroa and starts working on Chang's laptop. Lars can't access any information on the laptop but offers to reformat it for Chang. Meanwhile in Chicago, Chloe sneaks two members of Enoch's group into the Strong Building to get food. Zeke is surprised but quickly offers to help. Back at Chang's apartment Figueroa performs the polygraph on Chang. There is only one question that Chang answers in a way that Figueroa believes is suspect. At Petra, Chaim gives Hattie's ashes to Rayford to take to Chicago where he is to give them to Tsion to bring back on his trip to Petra. Leah adds David's cell phone as a way to remember him and requests that Hannah keep it with her.

After the Peacekeepers are gone and Chang is alone, he brings up the hidden information on his computer. Chang reconnects to the rest of the group and adds a profile for George in the GC computer base. He indicates the man will be traveling with two teenaged prisoners from Greece to the US without papers. He checks back in with the bug in Carpathia's plane. Those aboard are waiting for Viv Ivins so they can take off. Leon slips and mentions that Viv had gone to the temple to sit on Carpathia's throne. This angers Carpathia until Leon calms him by telling him she just wanted to violate a



few traditions. The stewards, pilot and passengers of the plane all pass their lie detector tests. Carpathia is, however, angry with Mrs. Ivins when she admits that she did sit in his throne.

Chapters 16 and 17 Analysis

In this section of the novel, Chloe and the group from the treasury building get to know one another. Chloe learns that these Christians are people who once lived a questionable background but are now saved. They also admit that they are hungry. Chloe agrees to help the people with food. They are important to Chloe because they are willing to help with the work of the Tribulation Force. This adds to the number of personnel who are willing and able to help out the Tribulation Force's cause.

Meanwhile, Chang's inspection goes well for him. As he is being asked the questions on the lie detector test, he does not lie because he considers God to be the only one who fits the description of the "supreme potentate." It is only the last question that gives Chang a problem as Figueroa asks if Chang will continue to serve the Global Community leader as he has in his past. Chang sticks with his vague answer even though Figueroa suggests that the answer could bring him under investigation. Chang's behavior during the interview could be considered light, almost to the point of being smart aleck, as he deals with the peacekeepers who have basically broken into his home. Chang's behavior is actually exactly what is needed to keep the peacekeepers from suspecting he is hiding something. He invites Lars to try to fix his computer, which he intentionally crashed and still has information hidden on, while he is in the apartment. As Chang had counted on, Lars is unable to access any information on the laptop.

Also in this section, Carpathia becomes unusually angry at Viv Ivins for sneaking off to the temple to sit in his throne. Fortunato tries to soothe Carpathia by telling him that Ivins just wanted to break a few traditions. Carpathia shows his irritation, however, by adding one question to her lie detector test intended to determine if the woman who pretends to be his mother actually sat in his throne or not. Ivins admits to the transgression and apologizes to Carpathia but Carpathia will not accept the apology.

A new story line is also started as the character Laslos Miklos is introduced in the novel. Although Laslos has been hiding underground after the Greece Church that he helped sponsor was raided and most members killed. A teen whose parents were killed in the raid approaches Laslos seeking help.



Chapters 18 and 19

Chapters 18 and 19 Summary

In Chapter 18, Buck and Marcel go over the plans to get Marcel and Georgiana out of Greece. Meanwhile, Chang that even though the stewards on Carpathia's plane passed their lie detector tests, he still wants to have them charged with treason in order to send a message to whoever is causing his security problems. In Greece, Laslos wishes that he could go to America with the teens. Back on Carpathia's plane, Akbar tells Carpathia about the disappearance of the troops that advanced on Petra. Carpathia laughs in disbelief. When he realizes Akbar is serious, Carpathia calls for a meeting of all of the potentates worldwide. He tells Akbar nothing should be said of the failed operation. They instead accuse the soldiers in the operation as being AWOL.

Meanwhile in Greece, Laslos and Marcel meet K in his car and drive to the spot where they are supposed to meet the girl. Laslos becomes spooked, first when the girl shows up late, then when the pilot comes early. Laslos warns K the situation is not right but Georgiana pulls a gun out of her bag and orders K to stop. Marcel pulls Georgiana's ball cap off and reveals the mark of the beast on her forehead. She shoots Marcel, then shoots K when he refuses to stop the car. The car stops and three men join the girl, whom they refer to as Elena. She holds her gun to Laslos' forehead and kills him.

Meanwhile, George as George drives to pick up his prisoners he sees the girl running toward him. She says they were ambushed and wraps her arms around him. She calls out that he is unarmed and with the help of the men, handcuffs and blindfolds him and drives away with him. The men make it known that they want information from George. George plans to not give them anything.

In Chapter 19, Rayford gets a call from Pinkerton Stephens warning him that his group has been compromised. GC has learned Albie's real identity, he says. He adds that George Sebastian has been captured. Apparently, the real Georgiana got caught and told what she knew about the Trib Force. Stephens describes the ambush that the girl chosen to act as Georgiana had leads the others into as well as the three deaths. Stephens tells Rayford to put a turban on Abdullah and pretend that he is the pilot. He gives Rayford a new name for Abdullah and a refueling number for Maryland. They will then stop at Resurrection Field. At his office, Chang wonders how David handled the computer system for he Trib Force alone. Meanwhile, Chaim feels as if Petra is heaven on earth. The people are cooperative and happy. The people are sent quail to roast for food and manna to eat.

The news from Plank's phone call is devastating to those in the Chicago safe house especially Chloe because it was her movements that were picked up by the GC. On a happier note, she plans to meet the plane when it lands. Back in Jerusalem, Chang hurries home to check the recording of Carpathia's meeting with the rest of the world potentates. In the meeting, Carpathia blames the problem with the water on the Jews



and Micah. Carpathia plans to embrace an anti-Jew policy and wage war against these people in all ten regions of the world. He tells them that Tsion, the leader of the Jews, will be speaking at Petra. Akbar describes the attack that he has planned for Petra when Tsion arrives there. Carpathia also tells his people not to kill the Jews who refuse to take the mark of loyalty, but instead to torture them.

Chapters 18 and 19 Analysis

The road become rocky for the Tribulation Force as Rayford learns that the Global Community has gathered much information about them assumedly from the Greek teenager who was kidnapped. Some key members of the Tribulation Force have been identified. The GC's heat seeking equipment has also picked up heat signals from inside Chicago, a city that is supposed to be evacuated. These heat signals have apparently come from Chloe and her friends as they have made their treks across the city.

It is also in this section that Carpathia turns up the heat on people who have not yet taken the mark of loyalty. Any of these who refuse to take the mark who are Jews will not be quickly killed by the guillotine, but will be tortured to any degree that the GC leaders are able to do so. Carpathia even offers a bribe for those who are able to come up with the best form of torture.

Things also go badly in the attempt to rescue two teenaged Greek Christians. A GC teen takes the place of Georgiana and shoots Marcel, K and Laslos. George is taken captive during the ambush. Although Laslos tells K that he believes there is something wrong with the mission when Georgiana does not show up when she is supposed to, K does not drive away but instead waits. George later chides himself for not treating this mission as a real military mission but instead not being as cautious as he should have been. Although George believes it is strange when the girl runs up to him, he does not react quickly enough to get away.



Chapters 20 and 21

Chapters 20 and 21 Summary

In Chapter 20, George feels shame because he did not treat the rescue of the teens as a military operation. When the men come to question him, their interview techniques are so much like something in a movie that he laughs. A slap across the mouth sobers him. George continues to ignore the men talking, knowing that ignoring them is more frustrating to them than responding to them would be. Meanwhile, Chang finds the list of AWOL GC employees and deletes his sister's name. He wonders how many people knew she was his sister and how long can he keep his family out if he was investigated. He believes that were his father to learn he was subversive, he would turn against him quickly. In Chicago, Rayford calls a meeting. Tsion is troubled because their group's safety is coming apart so quickly. Rayford chides Chloe for going out on her own in Chicago. He also raises questions about the allegiances of these new members. Tsion stands up for their trustworthiness but Rayford does not want anyone new going on the Petra mission. Chloe is about to become angry with her father for making her stay in Chicago when he suggests that he is planning to send her to Greece with Hannah to oversee the situation with Sebastian.

Meanwhile, Chang begins building profiles on everyone participating in the coming missions. After he finishes this, he listens to more of Carpathia's meeting. One of the leaders mentions that even people with the mark are beginning to speak out against Carpathia. Fortunato decrees they set up three specific daily times for the people to worship Carpathia. Those who refuse and those who don't take the mark should be killed. Chang tells his mother about this new development.

In Chapter 21, the people from The Place move into the Strong Building. In a special broadcast, Fortunato announces that the grace period on taking the mark of loyalty has expired. As he tries to finish his announcement the lights go out in the church, then come back on to reveal the choir running and Fortunato falling. The picture is filled with a bright face and a voice so loud it can be heard even after Enoch turns off the volume on the television set in Chicago. The voice says that those taking the mark of the beast will be punished by God. The news station tries to replay Fortunato's message and goes off the air, but the angel's voice can still be heard.

In Jerusalem, Chang sees the image of the angel in the sky and drops to his knees. He has also received a message from his mother stating that they will not take the mark. His father is upset that he forced Chang to do so. In Greece, Sebastian is being brutalized by his captors, hit with the butt of a gun as well as a fist and a bicycle or motorcycle chain. He finally moves with a punch in a way so that it knocks him out, a welcome break. When he wakes his captors are dribbling water on his lips. He grasps the bottle and drinks all he can before they take it away. In Jerusalem, Chang is listening when Tsion tells Carpathia that if he allows Tsion and two companions safe helicopter passage to Petra, the water will return to normal. Carpathia agrees. After they



hang up, Carpathia tells Akbar that he wants Petra leveled soon after Tsion arrives there. Akbar surprises Carpathia by telling him they have arranged a feed so he can watch the attack live.

Chloe tells Rayford something is not right with their assignment as their Jeep had to be hot-wired but tells him that they won't leave Greece without Sebastian. In Petra, the people wave at Tsion's helicopter as it approaches. As Tsion disembarks and shakes out Hattie's ashes over the town, Abdullah and the people notice a pair of approaching fighter planes. Meanwhile, Chang watches the feed of the attack along with Carpathia. The people in Petra pray as the planes move in on them.

Chapters 20 and 21 Analysis

Just as tension is building in the plot and danger is increasing for the members of the Tribulation Force, this portion of the Left Behind series comes to a close. The cliff-hanger at the end is intended to draw readers into the next installment of the series. There are three different situations that are in jeopardy as the novel closes. First, the people of Petra are being closed in on by Carpathia's forces. They have been told to level the city and kill everyone there. Since their attempts at destroying the Christians in times past have not been successful, it is assumed this attempt might not work out in their favor as well, especially since Petra has been promised to the Christians as a refuge by God. Chloe also lets Rayford know that she senses there is something wrong with their mission as they had to hot-wire their Jeep in order to get it started. It instances past, such as the mission with the teens, things turned out badly when the Tribulation Force members did not follow their gut feelings about a situation. Therefore, it is uncertain what Hannah and Chloe's fate might be. Sebastian, as well, is left in a precarious position. He is being beaten by his captors in hopes that they can break his will. They don't seem to realize how strong Sebastian's intention not to talk really is.

There are a few positive notes at the conclusion of this section of the series. Chang's parents have seen the light in connection with Carpathia. When they learn that Carpathia plans to force everyone to take the mark, even Chang's father is offended by this order. Chang's mother writes to him that his father regrets having forced Chang to take the mark. The new recruits who have been added to the Tribulation Force are trustworthy. Even though Rayford will not let any of these new members in on the current missions, Tsion, who has had time to get acquainted with the people, vouches for their trustworthiness.



Characters

Nicolae Carpathia aka Antichrist

Nicolae Carpathia is the antichrist. He is the main enemy of the Tribulation Force. He encourages his people to get what he calls a mark of loyalty to him and worship a golden statue of him. In reality the mark is the mark of the beast. Anyone with this mark will not be allowed into heaven. Carpathia turns many of his followers against him when he first offends the Jews by riding a pig through the streets of Jerusalem. Many more people are offended by Carpathia the following day when he desecrates the temple by first murdering a man there and then slaughtering a pig in the Holy of Holies. Carpathia is a cruel dictator who kills those who anger or offend him. He is unsympathetic to his people even though they are suffering with great pain as a result of their boils. He gives the people the option of worshiping him or dying. He thinks nothing of accusing the stewards on his plane of treason even though there is no sufficient cause to suspect them just because he wants to make an example of them. Carpathia kills his own supreme commander when he is unable to get a broadcast of information by the Tribulation Force off the air fast enough for Carpathia. After Carpathia learns that his planned invasion by his troops at Petra has failed, Carpathia orders that all Jews who refuse to take the mark of the beast be tortured. At the conclusion of the novel, Carpathia is thrilled when he is allowed to watch a live broadcast of the attack on the city of Petra.

Chaim aka Micah

Chaim is the man chosen by God to lead the Israelis out of Jerusalem to Petra. Chaim doubts his own ability to do the job he has been given. He first asks for signs, then requests someone be sent with him to talk for him. Buck, who accompanies Chaim, knows that Chaim is the only one able to do the job that God has given him. After a visit from the angel Anis, Chaim finally seems ready for his job. He buys a small urn to keep Hattie's ashes in as a sign of her strength. It surprises Buck when Chaim finally begins speaking at the temple in Jerusalem. The once shy man speaks so loudly that Buck has to cover his ears. He also counters Carpathia's actions with information from the Bible about how each of these actions were forecasted in this book. Chaim is the one who tells the believers that they should find a way to get to Petra while those who are undecided should report to Masada. Once all the people who are undecided about their faith gather at Petra, Chaim testifies to them and preaches the message of salvation. Thousands of people are saved following his testimony. It is Chaim who announces Tsion's visit to Petra. Also, during his time as the modern day Moses, Chaim requests that he be called Micah. Although Buck researches the book of Micah in the Bible, he never figures why Chaim asks to be referred to as Micah.



Chloe

Chloe is Buck's wife and Kenny's mother. She is also the daughter of Rayford. She is one of the original Tribulation Force members. She is the head of the group's commodity co-op that arranges to get food and supplies that are no longer available to them on the world market. Although she is often told how central she is to Tribulation Force workings, Chloe wants to be in the middle of the action. At one point as she is asking her husband for a position on the front lines he tells her that Kenny, her son, needs her. Rayford adds that he cannot believe that they are fighting during a war about who should watch their baby.

While in Chicago, it is Chloe who notices and decides to investigate a light that she spots across the city. Because she goes out without letting anyone know, the GC picks up on her heat signals as she moves across the city. During her investigation, however, Chloe discovers that there is another group of Christians living in Chicago. This group agrees to be part of the commodity co-op and tells Chloe that they want to work and help the Tribulation Force.

Chang Wong

Chang Wong is the second in command in regards to the Tribulation Force's computer system. Chang takes over command of this system when David is murdered even though he is fearful that he is not capable of the duty. At the beginning of the novel, Chang contacts Tsion to let him know that he is considering suicide because he does not remember refusing or fighting against the application of the mark of the beast on his forehead. When he researches the matter, Chang learns that his father had him tranquilized so that he could be given the mark. Chang seems assured of his salvation when he is not afflicted with the boils that the other people who have taken the mark get. Because Chang does have the mark, he is able to work inside the GC system and provide the group with information in this way. During this time, Chang is trying to convince his mother and father that they do not need to follow Carpathia. It is after Carpathia makes a fool of himself in the temple, and then demands that the people take the mark or be killed, that Chang's mother writes to him and tells him that they have both decided that Carpathia is bad.

Hannah Palemoon

Hannah worked as a nurse with the Global Community before her death was faked when the Quazi crashed. Hannah works with Leah to provide first-aid services for the members of the Tribulation Force. Hannah has a friendship and perhaps budding romance with David, who is murdered by GC troops at Petra. Shortly before his death, Hannah writes a message to David explaining to him how hurt she was by his decision not to return to the United North American States after Operation Eagle was finished. She is hurt because he chooses not to tell her about the decision personally. She receives a response written by David just before he dies asking if he can call and



apologize to her by phone. When the group first learns there has been a situation at Petra, Hannah requests to be allowed to go because she knows only David is there, but Rayford will not allow it. When members of the group return to the safe house in Chicago, Hannah is given David's cell phone to keep with her and give Tsion as a remembrance of him. At the end of the novel, Hannah accompanies Chloe to Greece where they are to try and rescue George.

Dr. Tsion Ben-Judah

Dr. Tsion Ben-Judah is the spiritual mentor of the Tribulation Force. During much of this novel, he is stationed at the Strong Building in Chicago. It is to Tsion that Chang voices his concerns about his usefulness since he has taken the mark of the beast. Hattie, also, shares with Tsion her encounter with the angel Michael and his command to her to stand up the Carpathia publicly. Tsion has taught the members of the Tribulation Force that while they are at Petra, the believers will be fed with manna and their clothes will not wear out. It is in one of the messages that Tsion puts on the groups Web site that he mentions Petra as the name of the city where the Israelis will seek refuge. Even though Zeke tries to convince Tsion that God would not let one man ruin his plan, Tsion still feels awful about his slip. At the conclusion of the novel, Tsion makes a trip to Petra to visit the people there. While there, Tsion scatters Hattie's ashes out over the city. In the final scene, he and the people are praying as the GC planes approach the city in their intention to destroy it.

Leon Fortunato

Leon Fortunato is the Most High Reverend Father of Carpathianism. He is the first of those who takes the mark to be afflicted with the boils. When Hattie speaks out against Carpathia in the crowd at the temple, Fortunato is able to call down fire in order to destroy her. Fortunato's main job as part of the GC seems to be keeping Carpathia happy. It is Fortunato who requests that Carpathia agree to Chaim's demands so that the boils will be cured. It is also Fortunato who discovers that the water has turned to blood just as Chaim had prophesied. Although Carpathia is generally unhappy with Fortunato, Fortunato does please Carpathia when he decrees that every citizen should pay homage to Carpathia three times daily as well as being required to take the mark. Those who don't take the mark should be killed, Fortunato says. Fortunato is last seen as he tries to run from the bright face and voice that takes over his production from the Church of Carpathia.

Mac McCullum

Mac McCullum worked as a pilot for Carpathia until he faked his death in a Quasi crash so that he could work in the Tribulation Force. Mac seems to be second in command in the Tribulation Force as he is the one who takes over the operation when Rayford loses his hearing after shooting two GC troops without first putting in earplugs. Mac is one of



the Trib Force members involved in the attack on the GC forces that have invaded Petra before the Israeli Christians arrive there. Mac also goes with Albie, Leah and Rayford into Petra to clear out the stray GC troops responsible for killing David. After Rayford gets upset because he killed the two GC it is Mac who reminds him that he saved not only them but also the Christians in the helicopter on which the two GC had their guns trained. Mac also gives a pep talk to Hannah when she is so shocked and saddened by David's death that she cannot even talk.

Cameron Buck Williams aka Jack Jensen

Buck is the wife of Chloe and father of Kenny. Buck is given the task of accompanying Chaim, who is to act as a second Moses and lead the Israeli believers out of Jerusalem to the safety of Petra. Buck has difficulty believing that the feeble, old man that he knows will be able to be the powerful leader that is needed by the people. As Buck tries to encourage Chaim at the hotel, he finds himself speaking to Chaim in Hebrew even though he doesn't know the language. He also gives Chaim two signs to give to Carpathia to show that he has been filled with the power of God. When Hattie is killed by Fortunato, Buck gets frustrated with Chaim believing that it should have been Chaim who was killed. He walks away from Chaim and seeks refuge in the garden tomb of Christ. Chaim joins him and the angel Anis appears to both of them. Buck watches as Chaim seems to be strengthened by this angelic visit.

Commander Marcus Albie Elbaz

Commander Albie Elbaz is responsible for assisting Rayford at the airstrip at Mizpe Ramon. It is Albie who chooses George Sebastian as the lead helicopter pilot. Albie also takes David Hassid to Petra so he can begin preparing the area for the Israeli refugees. Albie does not share Rayford's anti-weapon view and believes that guns can be used as God's gifts if they keep them from losing any members of their group. He is with the men who go to Petra to clean out the troops that have gone there as a result of Tsion's information slip on the Web site. Albie is also part of the group who goes into Petra to determine David's status and clear out any remaining troops so that the refugees can be brought in. As the group is flying to Chicago to pick up Tsion, Rayford is warned that Elbaz's real identity has been exposed and they cannot land the plane using Elbaz as the pilot's name.

Captain Rayford Steele

Captain Rayford Steele is one of the original members of the Tribulation Force and the commander of these troops. He is Chloe's father and Kenny's grandfather. One of Rayford's most obvious personality characteristics is his aversion to the use of weapons. He voices his disapproval of the use of lethal force when George first tells him of the guns that he has secured for their troops. Rayford is sickened when he is forced to shoot the two stray GC troops at Petra even though he knows he is the only one with a



clear shot. When he shoots these men, Rayford forgets to put in earplugs and is unable to perform his job as a pilot as a result of his deafness. He wonders if God arranged for him to forget the earplugs so that he could get a break. The angel Michael appears to Rayford and heals his deafness and also strengthens him to finish his mission.

Loren Hut

Loren Hut of Canada is the Morale Monitor Chief for the GC. In their first meeting, Carpathia believes that Hut is being disrespectful to him because he does not refer to him with the respect that Carpathia considers proper. Hut is also the guard who is ordered by Carpathia to kill Chaim. Although he shoots Chaim at point blank range, the bullets have no effect on the priest. Irritated by sores and his inability to follow Carpathia's orders, Hut shoots a man in the crowd who is heckling him because his bullets have no effect on Chaim. Later, Hut is again "disrespectful" to Carpathia when Carpathia makes fun of his inability to kill Chaim. Carpathia shoots the man.

George Sebastian

George Sebastian is chosen by Albie to be the lead helicopter pilot for Operation Eagle. It is George who arranges for the group to get weapons with which to protect themselves. During the mission to pick up the two teenaged Greek Christians from Greece, George is captured by men who are assumed to be GC forces. These men torture George in an attempt to get information about the Tribulation Force out of him. George has already decided that he will not give the men any information. He uses his military background and training to resist the tactics that they use against him.

Walter Moon

Walter Moon is the Supreme Commander of the Global Community. It is Moon who gets the tranquilizer for Mr. Wong to force Chang to get the mark of loyalty. Moon then orders the technician to give Chang the mark even though he is obviously drugged and resisting. It is also Moon's idea that Carpathia concede to Chaim's demands so that the people will be cured of their boils. When Tsion's broadcast takes over the GCNN and Moon can't get the newscast stopped, Carpathia shoots Moon, first in his hands, then several other places before finally killing him.

Aurelio S. Figueroa

Aurelio Figueroa is the man that the GC chooses to replace David after he fakes his death in the Quasi crash. Figueroa turns out to be a Mexican who treats his subordinates like servants. He is domineering and a loner. Chang messes with Figueroa by correctly guessing his middle name when Figueroa tries to taunt Chang with the information that the Indian stewards have been condemned by Carpathia. Figueroa admits to Chang that he trusts him. He also promises to perform Chang's lie detector



test personally though he seems irritated when Chang actually calls Figueroa on this promise.

Laslos Miklos

Laslos worked as a lignite-mining magnate in Greece who used his business as a front to hide Greek Christians until there was a raid during one of the meetings. Laslos wife, his pastor and his pastor's wife were all killed during this raid. Laslos feels guilty because he did not attend the meeting and was saved. He has gone into hiding to keep from being killed. While he is helping Rayford get two Greek teens to safety in Chicago, Laslos is shot by Elena, a girl who pretends to be one of these Christian teens but is actually a Carpathian loyalist.

David Hassid

David Hassid is the main computer systems manager for the Tribulation Force. He is responsible for keeping all members of the force in computer contact with one another as well as encrypting this information so that it cannot be hacked by others. David is sent to Petra to help prepare it for the Israeli refugees who are expected to flee there to avoid Carpathia's wrath. While waiting for these refugees to arrive, David is murdered by two stray GC forces in Petra.

Hattie Durham

Hattie Durham is the young Christian to whom the angel Michael appears. From this appearance, Hattie understands that she is to stand up to Carpathia at the Temple. Fortunato is able to call down a ball of fire that kills Hattie in front of the crowd. In this way, Hattie becomes a martyr for the Christian faith. After the angel Anis appears to Buck and Chaim in the Garden Tomb, Chaim collects Hattie's ashes into a small urn, which he carries with him. He later shakes Hattie's ashes into the air over Petra.

Michael

Michael is an angel who first appears to Hattie to tell her that she has been chosen to testify against Carpathia. Later, Rayford sees Michael standing with Chaim and Buck but Rayford is the only one who can see him. Michael has come to heal Rayford's hearing and to restore his strength to get him through the rest of the mission. Later, Michael appears to all that are in the helicopter after they are not hurt by the GC's bombs to assure them that they will be protected by God.



Mrs. Wong

Mrs. Wong is the mother of Chang and Ming. She is never entirely decided if she should follow Carpathia or not. She does not take an active stand against Carpathia as her children do, but tries to encourage her husband to let the children make up their own minds. After Carpathia makes the requirement that all people must get the mark, Mrs. Wong is relieved because her husband finally realizes how bad Carpathia is. She also is curious about Chaim's ability to predict what Carpathia will do.

Rashid

Rashid is the GCNN cameraman who records Carpathia's encounter with Chaim at Temple Mount. When Rashid tries to pan the camera so the people can see the agonized loyalists, Carpathia commands him not to do so. Also while videotaping, Rashid falls to one knee. Carpathia tells him that he does not need to fear because he has the mark but Rashid says he has fallen because he is in pain. Later, Rashid crawls away from the camera to go to the medic lines for treatment.

Dr. Consuela Conchita

Dr. Consuela Conchita is the GC doctor who is in charge of explaining to the people the nature and cause of the boils. She tells the people that the affliction does not seem to be connected with the loyalty mark but that examiners have been able to find no specific diagnosis or treatment for the pandemic. She suggests the people get a treatment of antibiotics, although this medicine hasn't proven to have any affect on the boils, and use whatever method of itch relief they find most helpful.

Marcel Papadopoulos

Marcel Papadopoulos is one of the two teens who is saved from a riot in Greece. He is sent to Laslos by K. Laslos asks Rayford to come up with a plan to get Marcel as well as the girl to safety in Chicago. Laslos knows Marcel through his parents as they were in the same church at the time of the riots. Marcel is shot by Elena, a Carpathian loyalist, who pretends to be Georgiana.

Leah Rose

Leah is a nurse with the Tribulation Force. She and Hannah become close friends as they both are involved in nursing duties. It is Leah who goes into Petra to look for David. She is also the one who finds his mutilated body. She supports Hannah through the loss of David as best she can. When the group heads back to Chicago, Leah puts David's cell phone in Hannah's care until it can be given to Tsion.



Zeke

Zeke is a Tribulation Force member who stays in the Strong Building in Chicago with Chloe and Tsion. He is the one responsible for changing the Trib Force members' outward appearances so they will not be recognized by the GC. It is Zeke who gives Chloe the telescope that she uses to find the people staying in the exchange building. Zeke agrees to help these people when Chloe tells him they are hungry.

Abdullah Smith aka Smitty

Abdullah Smith is also presumed dead in the crash of the Quasi but has actually defected from the GC to go to work for the Tribulation Force. Abdullah is also a pilot and takes over for Albie after Rayford learns that the GC has learned Albie's identity. Abdullah pretends to be of Middle Eastern descent by putting on a turban as he flies.

Suhail Akbar

Suhail Akbar is the Director of Security and Intelligence for the Global Community. Suhail is basically Carpathia's right hand man when it comes to military issues. He carries out Carpathia's commands to the best of his ability in order to keep Carpathia from getting angry with him.

Anis aka The Guard

Anis is an angel of God who masquerades as the guard at Christ's garden tomb. When both Chaim and Buck are inside the tomb, Anis speaks to them asking why they seek the living among the dead. Chaim considers this encounter with the angel as a sign from the Lord.

Ming Toy

Ming is Chang's sister. When Chang sees her name on the list of AWOL employees from the GC he deletes it. Ming does not believe in Carpathia and refuses to take the mark. It is Ming's idea for Chang to break into the GC's television network and broadcast Tsion's debate of Carpathia's message on television.

Viv Ivins

Viv Ivins is the person chosen to represent Carpathia's mother during his re-enactment of Jesus' walk down the Via Dolorosa. Later in the novel, Carpathia gets angry at Viv because she goes to Solomon's Temple and sits in Carpathia's throne.



Mr. Wong

Mr. Wong, who is the father of Chang and Ming, forces Chang to get the mark of the beast. Later, when he sees how badly Carpathia acts and realizes that he is not worthy of being followed, Mr. Wong regrets having forced his son to get the mark.

Bernadette Rice

Bernadette Rice is the GCNN anchorwoman who interviews the crowd at Solomon's Temple on the day of Carpathia's tour of Jerusalem. She is also reporting the news as Hut tries to shoot Chaim unsuccessfully.

Georgiana Stavros

Georgiana is one of the teens saved from a riot in Greece. Tribulation Force members are trying to get the two teens out of Greece to safety but the operation is ambushed because Georgiana is caught and a Carpathian loyalist takes her place.

Lars

Lars is a cocky, condescending Scandinavian who comes to Chang's apartment to perform Chang's lie detector test. Lars also tries to work on Chang's computer but is not able to break through to Chang's hidden data.

Kronos

Kronos is the man known simply as K. He is the man who drives the getaway car to take Marcel and Georgiana to meet Sebastian. K is shot by Elena who pretends to be Georgiana.

Elena

Elena is the girl who pretends to be Georgiana Stavros. She is responsible for the ambush in Greece and the kidnapping of George Sebastian. She is armed and shoots Marcel, K and Laslos.

Pinkerton Stephens aka Steve Plank

Stephens once worked for the Global Community in media relations. He contacts Rayford to tell him just how much the Global Community knows about the people involved in the Tribulation Force.

Enoch

Enoch is the Spaniard who was the leader and pastor of the group of believers that lives in the exchange building that Chloe discovers in Chicago.

Kenny

Kenny is Chloe and Buck's son and Rayford's grandson. He stays in Chicago with his mother at the Strong Building.



Objects/Places

Quasi Two

The Quasi Two is the plane that the members of the Tribulation Force purposefully crash to make it appear that they have been killed.

Tribulation Force

The Tribulation Force is a group of people who believe in Christ who defend other Christians and testify against the Antichrist during the great tribulation.

Mizpe Ramon

This location in the Negev Desert is the central point for Operation Eagle.

Negev Desert

The Negev Desert is part of Israel. Mizpe Ramon is located in this desert.

United Carpathian States

The United Carpathian States is one of the governmental regions under the control of the Global Community. This area consists of what might also be referred to as the Holy Land in the Middle East.

Global Community

The Global Community is the name of the governmental body ruled by Nicholae Carpathia.

Operation Eagle

Operation Eagle is the name of the military operation undertaken by the Tribulation Force to move the believers to the ancient city of Petra where they will be protected from Carpathia.



Mark of the Believer

The Mark of the Believer is a mark placed on those who profess their belief in Christ. Only other believers can see this mark.

Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv is the place the Quasi crashes, leaving GC workers to believe that Hannah, Mac, Abdullah and David are dead.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is considered to be the Holy City where Jesus was crucified. It is this same city that Carpathia has set up as his headquarters during his reign.

DEW

This is an acronym for a Directed Energy Weapon. This weapon is nonlethal, but can be used to heat up the moisture on a man's skin to 130 degrees.

Mark of the Beast aka Mark of Loyalty

The Mark of Loyalty that Carpathia requires his followers to have is called the Mark of the Beast by Tribulation Force members. Once a person has this mark, they are not allowed to take refuge in Petra. They are considered to have forever turned their backs on God.

King David Hotel

The King David Hotel is the hotel where Chaim and Buck stay during their time in Jerusalem.

The Water

After Carpathia goes back on his promise not to attack the fleeing Christians, all water, including the oceans, is turned to blood.

Basement of the Palace

It was in the basement of Carpathia's palace that Chang had believed that his mark had been applied.



Petra

Petra is an ancient city made of rock where it is planned for the Christians to take refuge from Carpathia and his forces.

Via Dolorosa

The Via Dolorosa is the way that Jesus walked on his way to Cavalry. It is this same way that Carpathia walks in his tour of Jerusalem.

The Pig

Carpathia rides this pig for a short while on the Via Dolorosa then later slaughters it in the Holy of Holies in the temple. The pig is the ultimate offense to Jews because this animal is considered by them to be unclean.

GC Peacekeeping Forces

The Global Community's Peacekeeping Forces are the military of this community. It is two of these troops that break into Chang's apartment to search for computer equipment and also give him a lie detector test.

Jesus' Sepulcher

It is in this Sepulcher that the angel Anis appears to Buck and Chaim.

Small Replica of the Container in which the Dead Sea Scrolls

Chaim buys this urn at a souvenir shop near Jesus' sepulcher and puts Hattie's ashes in it.

Loyalty Enforcement Facilitator

The loyalty enforcement facilitator is the name Carpathia and his forces use to describe the guillotine.

Solomon's Temple

Carpathia defiles this temple, which is a sacred religious site for the Jews, by killing a man there and then slaughtering a pig in the Holy of Holies.



Glorious Appearing

The Glorious Appearing is the term used to describe Jesus' second coming to Earth.

Edom

Edom is the country in which Petra lies.

Lamb's Book of Life

The Lamb's Book of Life is the journal in which all the names of those who have trusted in Christ for their salvation.

Halfway Point of the Tribulation Period

In this book in the "Left Behind" series, the action occurs during the halfway point in the Tribulation Period.

The Plague of Boils

The plague of boils strikes all those who have taken Carpathia's Mark of Loyalty. This plague is called off when Carpathia promises to let the Christians and Jews flee Jerusalem without pursuing them.

Knesset Building

The Knesset Building is the building in which Carpathia has set up his headquarters in Jerusalem.

Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives is one of the places where people can go to be airlifted to the safety of Petra.

Judah-ites

The Judah-ites is the name given to the followers of Tsion Ben-Judah.



Holy of Holies

The Holy of Holies is the part of Solomon's Temple where Carpathia offends the Jewish people by slaughtering a pig.

Masada

Masada is the place where the Orthodox Jews are instructed to gather so that they can worship God as they wish until they choose to accept Christ as their savior. At this point, they will be moved to Petra.

Telescope

Zeke gives Chloe this telescope when she asks for a pair of binoculars. She uses the telescope to discover the source of light she has been seeing across the city of Chicago.

The 144,000

The 144,000 is the number of Christians who will survive the tribulation to witness Christ's second coming.

GCNN

The GCNN is the Global Community News Network. Although this television network is intended to broadcast the news as approved by Carpathia, members of the Tribulation Force are often able to break into the broadcast on occasion to spread their own message.

The Strong Building

The Strong Building is the building in Chicago considered to be a safe building for the Tribulation Force in that city.

Phoenix 216

The Phoenix 216 is the type plane that Carpathia owns. Chang has this plane bugged so that he can hear any conversations going on in its cabin.



International Commodity Co-op

The International Commodity Co-op is the way that the Tribulation Force members get and share supplies. This co-op was created by Chloe.

The Place

The Place is the church that the people hidden in the Chicago exchange building had attended and found their faith.

Ptolemais

Ptolemais is the city in Greece where Laslos Milkos had hidden out after the raid on the Greek church members. It is also to this city that Hannah and Chloe travel at the end of the novel to try to help Sebastian.

Church of Carpathia

The Church of Carpathia is where Fortunado's message is pre-empted by a message from an angel.



Themes

Faith

Throughout the novel, one idea is repeated several times by members of the Tribulation Force. They say that this mission they are on is a mission of faith. Without this blind belief that God is going to protect and provide for the people, the members of the Tribulation Force would have no reason to believe that they could be successful in what they are hoping to do.

For instance, although Petra is the city of safety, David notes as he walks through the city that will airplanes and modern technology, the city is as exposed as any other city, even with its high rock walls. He realizes that without the divine protection of God, there will be no way to keep the people safe. Tribulation Force workers must also trust that once they get all of the people to Petra, he will provide food for them as he has promised.

The people of the Tribulation Force must also have faith in the people that God has put in leadership positions. Chaim, for instance, is to play the role of the modern day Moses. He is to convince the people to leave Jerusalem and seek refuge in Petra. Buck, who stays with Chaim as he is preparing for his mission, doubts that Chaim can do what he has been called to do. He departs from faith and tries to determine if there are any other people who could fill Chaim's role. Buck is surprised when the time comes for Chaim to perform his duty. Buck has no idea where the power and strength in Chaim has come from.

The debate concerning whether Tribulation Force troops should use weapons or not is also a matter of faith. Rayford is against the idea of using weapons and having to kill anyone, even GC forces who are threatening his people. He prefers for God to take care of any killing that has to be done. Others, including George and Albie, believe there is nothing wrong with allowing the troops to use weapons to protect themselves. They believe these weapons could be considered a means that God has provided in order to take care of themselves. Several times when the Tribulation Force troops might have turned to weapons, God steps forward with a means to protect the people that does not involve weapons. Rayford is never entirely convinced that weapons are acceptable means of protection while the others are not completely convinced that relying on faith means they must go unarmed against an armed enemy.

Prophecy

One of the major tools that Chaim and Tsion use again Carpathia is the prophecy of the Bible that foretells Carpathia's actions. For instance, in the message that Tsion puts on the Web site, he writes about the way that all of the things that Carpathia is doing that he believes are unique thoughts and actions, are actually recorded in the Christian



Bible. The troops of the Tribulation Force believe the Bible prophecies that God will protect the 144,000 believers as prophesied in the Bible. As Chaim testifies to the people at the temple in Jerusalem, he describes the 109 Biblical prophecies that Jesus fulfilled during his lifetime. He does this so the Jewish people will come to believe that Jesus Christ actually was the Messiah for whom they had been waiting.

Prophecy is not only important in the sense that it is used to influence the Jews to adopt Christian beliefs but also that many of Carpathia's actions in this novel fulfill these prophecies. For instance, Carpathia's desecration of the temple of Solomon was foretold in the Bible. In fact, Carpathia's reign as the antichrist was foretold in this same book. It is also the prophecy of the Bible that lets Chaim and the other members of the Tribulation Force know what Carpathia's next acts will be. These prophecies also tell Tision and the others that Petra will be a place of safety for the Israeli Christians.

Fear

Fear is another major issue in this novel. As the Tribulation Force progresses in its plans to draw people away from Carpathia, they battle against fear. Although they all agree they are on a mission of faith, even their faith allows occasional fear to break through. One of the major times that this fear breaks through is when the Tribulation Force is trying to get people into Petra but Carpathia has gone back on his promise not to harm the people and has now sent armed troops to annihilate these people. The fear that God will not be able to protect them is so strong that the Trib Force members decide to distribute weapons. Even though they arm themselves, the Trib Force members never have to use these weapons. The GC forces are swallowed by a giant crevice that opens in the ground. Even in this fearful situation, God not only protects these people, but also sends the angel Michael to comfort the people.

Chang's fear associated with being marked with the mark of the beast is another interesting fearful situation in this novel. Chang is at the point of killing himself because he is afraid that he did not stand up for God as he should have. Even after Chang discovers that he did not willingly take the mark, he is not completely assured that he is one of God's chosen until he does not get the plague of boils, as all of the others who have taken the mark have done.

Chaim is also fearful of the assignment that God has given him. He is to be a modern day Moses who will escort the people out of Jerusalem to the safety of Petra. Chaim believes that he is too weak, too old and too unworthy to do what he is supposed to do. Despite Chaim's fear and his lack of belief in himself, God is able to work through him to do what he is intended to do.



Style

Point of View

The story is recounted from the third-person and omniscient perspective. There is really no stronger focus on any one character than the others although the main characters; Carpathia, Chaim, Buck, and Chloe do get more emphasis than some of the others.

This point of view works well for this novel since the action really doesn't focus only on one particular character but instead on the actions of the Tribulation Force which is a group of people working in a variety of different locations. To try to tell the story in a first-person point of view would make it seem more like a report than a story.

With the third person narrator, the action flows from one scene and plot to another without the difficulties of trying to record all of this action as documented, or recorded, by one person. Television coverage and wire taps allow the Tribulation Force members to get information about GC actions without any of these characters taking over the narration.

Setting

There are a variety of different settings in the novel with the most important of these being in Jerusalem. The Via Dolorosa, the road that Christ walked on his way through Jerusalem to the cross is one of the important settings as Carpathia re-enacts this trip. Solomon's Temple is another extremely important setting. It is Carpathia's actions in this temple that cause a great many of his followers to realize he is not the person they once thought he was. Christians, Jews and the undecided alike are offended when Carpathia murders a man in the temple and then slaughters a pig in the Holy of Holies. Although this is a major center of worship for both Jews and Christians, Carpathia announces that all sacrifices in this temple should be to him from that point forward.

Petra is another important setting in this book. This ancient city is the place that God has promised to keep the Christians safe from Carpathia when he announces that all who have not taken the mark of loyalty should be killed. The novel tells the story of the Tribulation Force's attempt to get the people safely into Petra despite Carpathia's attempts to stop the flight of the people.

The city of Chicago is also an important setting in this novel as it is in this city that several of the members of the Tribulation Force, including its spiritual mentor, Tsion, take refuge. It is believed this city is deserted because a rumor has been circulated declaring that the city is poisoned by radiation, a rumor that prompted its evacuation. Tribulation Force members, however, are in hiding in the Strong Building in Chicago, where they are able to work without interference by the GC. In the course of the novel, Chloe discovers another group of Christians hiding out in the city.



Greece is another setting that comes into play late in the novel as the Tribulation Force tries unsuccessfully to rescue the Christian teenagers from this area. One member of the force, George Sebastian, is taken hostage in this country. At the end of the novel, Chloe and Hannah are sent to Greece to try to free George.

Language and Meaning

What is most interesting about the language in this novel, particularly that of the Global Community, is the positive spin they try to put on everything they present to the people, even those that will harm them. For instance, the mark which they take in honor of Carpathia is referred to in the Bible as the mark of the beast. Of course, even if the Carpathians were believers in the Bible, they wouldn't want to give their symbol a negative connotation, so they call it the mark of loyalty. In order to "encourage" the people to take the mark, they keep a guillotine near the marking stations. Again, instead of calling this instrument of death what it really is, they call it a "loyalty enforcement facilitator." Those who take the mark are then "invited" to worship Carpathia's image, a term that implies that a person has the option to not worship if they wish. GC Morale Monitors and Peacekeepers, which are also misnamed groups as they are simply the military force of the area, let the people know that worship of Carpathia's image is required. Although the way they term things leads people to believe that the GC is giving people a choice and promoting a happy life when in reality, they are manipulating words to get the reactions they desire from the people.

While the members of the Tribulation Force do not use language in a manipulative way, as the GC does, they do use it to try to influence others. Obviously, the intent of the Tribulation Force is to lure people away from the worship of Carpathia. Much of their means of influencing the people comes from Chaim's use of Biblical prophecy that foretold of Carpathia's actions long before Carpathia was even born. Although the story is easily understood by all readers as a fight between good and evil, the story is more deeply appreciated and understood by those who are familiar with Biblical language and the stories told in this book.

Structure

This novel is the ninth book in the Left Behind series that tells the story of Christ's second coming to earth and associated events as described in the Book of Revelation in the Christian Bible. Because this book is part of a series, it is somewhat difficult to understand as a stand-alone novel. Although a brief prologue is included that gives some information from the prior book in the sequence, the novel still seems to start in the middle of the action. It is difficult for a new reader to understand what exactly is happening as new characters and places are introduced quickly with little background information.

Another aspect of the structure of the novel that makes it a frustrating read is the author's tendency to switch back and forth between many different plots and settings



where things are occurring simultaneously. The reader can feel as if they are having a bit of mental whip lash when the author builds up to a climax in one plot, then suddenly switches to another plot, which he is also building up to a climax. The novel also ends with a cliff hanger with unresolved conflict on several different plots, a technique probably intended to get the reader to continue with the next book in the series.

The novel is divided into 21 different chapters. There is a variety of action and subplots included in the major theme of the novel. As Chaim and Buck work to get the Israeli believers to the safety of Petra, other Tribulation Force members are dealing with their own personal struggles and issues. For instance, Chloe is trying to determine the source of a strange light in the city of Chicago which is supposed to be deserted and Chang is struggling with getting his own family members to realize how bad Carpathia actually is.



Quotes

"Engaged in the riskiest endeavor of his life, Rayford had cast his lot with God and the miracle of technology" (Chapter 1, p. 1).

"The Tribulation Force believed that Antichrist and his minions were about to attack Israeli Christ-followers and that, when they fled, Rayford and his recruited fellow believers would serve as agents of rescue" (Chapter 1, p. 2).

"God has decided, my friend. You have the seal of God upon you, according to our trusted brothers. You did not accept the mark of Antichrist, nor will you worship him" (Chapter 1, p. 10).

"Doing harm to yourself because you can't figure out why God might have let something happen would be the most royally selfish act you could conjure up" (Chapter 2, p. 20).

"Hattie sat panting. She took the message to mean she was to speak out against the lies of Antichrist. She prayed that God would give her the courage, because she could only imagine what would happen" (Chapter 3, p. 40).

"'Do what God tells you to do,' he said. 'We're depending on him to protect his chosen people and those who are here to help them'" (Chapter 3, p. 44).

"Chaim was brilliant and fluent in his own field, but to expect this ancient, tiny, quaking man with the weak - and perhaps now nonexistent - voice to call down the Antichrist, to rally the very remnant of Israel, to stand against the forces of Satan" (Chapter 3, p. 44-45).

"'Not true,' Chaim whispered. Buck leaned close. 'Carpathia—Antichrist—Satan is not omniscient. He cannot tell his False Prophet what he himself cannot know'" (Chapter 3, p. 54).

"Oh, yes. We believe that the beautiful temple was constructed with the best intentions to honor god, even though the ancients were unaware that they had misplaced their devotion. They meant to serve the one true god but were misled by their own innocent ignorance and erred only in directing worship to their chosen deity" (Chapter 5, p. 82).

"Buck wasn't sure how Chaim felt or how he would know when the time had come to reveal himself as the enemy of Carpathia, but the more he watched, the more Buck could barely contain himself. He realized that these people - all of them - were choosing Satan and hell before his very eyes, that he was powerless to dissuade them, and that their choice was once and for all" (Chapter 5, pg. 85).

"Ah, Cameron! If this had to do with logic, what would I be doing here? Look at me! An old man, a scientist. I should be in an easy chair somewhere. But here I am, a stranger



in my own mirror, trying to tell God he has made a mistake. But he will not listen. He is more stubborn than I. He uses the simple to confound the wise. His ways are not ours" (Chapter 5, p. 94).

"Tsion taught that God had promised food from heaven and that clothes would not wear out, but what would substitute for insulation, inner walls, and anything resembling modern conveniences" (Chapter 6, p. 97).

"Rather than a place of refuge, David decided, without the hand of God this place could just as easily be ideal for an ambush" (Chapter 6, p. 98).

"While she was not identified—the death of a woman they thought dead previously would have been a puzzler to the GC anyway - it was clear she had died for her courage to speak against the ruler of this earth. The GC did not spin it that way, of course, but boasted of the event, using it as an example of the veracity of Carpathia's claims of deity and confirmation of Fortunato's role as his designate of spiritual power and wonders" (Chapter 6, p. 100).

"And the first went, and poured out his bowl upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image" (Chapter 6, p. 111).

"You said it yourself, you pray about this stuff. That doesn't make your messages like the Bible, I guess, but God's not gonna let a regular human like you mess up his plan with one mistake, is he" (Chapter 7, p. 119).

"Israeli Jews who have chosen to believe Jesus the Christ is their Messiah must be allowed to leave before you punish anyone for not taking your mark. And devout Orthodox Jews must be allowed a place where they can worship after you have defiled their temple" (Chapter 7, p. 132).

"People knelt before him, following him in prayer. The mark of the seal of God appeared on their foreheads" (Chapter 8, p. 145).

"It is no secret that Orthodox Jews have continued with the daily rituals and sacrifices of their own faith even after Enigma Babylon One World Faith was instituted as the only legal international religion, designed to incorporate the tenets of all faiths. After His Excellency resurrected himself from the dead, he became our object of worship, resulting in the dissolution of One World Faith and the establishing of Carpathianism" (Chapter 9, p. 156).

"We retreat not in fear but rather because you have turned the house of God into a killing field" (Chapter 9, p. 159).

"What plans he has for the beast with which he ridiculed the Via Dolorosa will be revealed only as he invades deeper into God's own territory" (Chapter 9, p. 160).



"David sat with his mouth open, wondering how anyone could take seriously a man who not only thumbed his nose at God, but who also acted like a drunken reveler at a frat party" (Chapter 9, p. 163).

"The Orthodox Jews and the undecided were allowed at Masada, but no one who had taken the mark of the beast could enter" (Chapter 9, p. 171).

"I am here to remind you that this script has already been written. I have read it. You lose" (Chapter 10, p. 179).

"Rayford spun and caught himself, afraid he would be sick. Isolated by his deafness, he was overcome with remorse. He had done this. He had killed these two. He had lost a man in a place that was supposed to be a refuge. Now his airstrip was vulnerable, and the entrance to Petra swarmed with chopper loads of people waiting to be let in" (Chapter 12, p. 223).

"Was it possible that God had allowed him to forget something so simple as earplugs just to put him out of commission long enough to restore his strength" (Chapter 11, p. 230).

"'You're doing the right thing, Nicolae,' Viv Ivins said. 'You should kill them all and start over'" (Chapter 11, p. 253).

"I can't believe I'm standing here in the middle of the desert, arguing with my wife about who's going to watch the baby" (Chapter 14, p. 272).

"Our planes waited until the dust cloud settled and now find no evidence of our troops" (Chapter 18, p. 341).

"Ah, Suhail. You will one day come to realize that there is no such thing as overkill. Let the Jews and the Judah-ites think they have had their little victory. And keep the failed operation quiet. We never launched it" (Chapter 18, p. 342).

"He cut loose a couple of kids from a detention center and one of 'em—the girl, Stavros—got herself caught. You can't blame her; she's just a teenager, but apparently she cracked and gave up a lot" (Chapter 19, p. 358-59).

"In Petra Chaim felt as if he were already in heaven" (Chapter 19, p. 362).

"Who are the Judah-ites? They claim to be Jesus-followers, but they follow Ben-Judah, a Jew. Jesus himself was a Jew. They are fond of referring to me as Antichrist. Well, I will embrace Anti-Jew. And so will you" (Chapter 19, p. 366-67).

"There are no limits on the degradation I am asking, requiring, you to inflict. No clothes, no heat, no cooling, no medicine. Just enough food to keep them alive for another day of suffering" (Chapter 19, p. 370).



"George decided it would serve him right if they shot him right there. He had treated this assignment like a game and now had exposed the entire Tribulation Force" (Chapter 20, p. 376).

"This time, as soon as the video rolled, the message from the bright visage overwhelmed it. Again the error message flashed but could not overcome the angelic announcement" (Chapter 21, pg. 395).

"He went outside into the hot sun, and there in the sky was the overpowering image of the angel of God. Chang dropped hard to his knees, panting, astounded that anyone anywhere in the world could doubt that Carpathia was the enemy of the one true God, and after this, they could doubt it only out of stubborn rebellion" (Chapter 21, p. 395).

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the topic of faith as it pertains to this novel.

Discuss the topic of Biblical prophecy as it pertains to the novel.

What is Chaim's role in the novel? How does his character change through the course of the novel?

What is the significance of the setting of Petra in the novel?

Why do the Jewish priests become so angry when Carpathia defiles the temple?

What is the significance of the mark of loyalty? What does it actually represent? What does it mean for the people who have the mark?

Why is Chang able to avoid the plague of the boils even though he has the mark of the beast?

What influences Chang's parents in their decision not to declare their loyalty to Carpathia?

The novel ends with a cliffhanger. How do you believe this situation will be resolved?