

# **Tribulation Force: The Continuing Drama of Those Left Behind Study Guide**

**Tribulation Force: The Continuing Drama of Those Left Behind by Tim LaHaye**

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# Plot Summary

"Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins is a book set at the beginning of the Tribulation, the period in which the world begins its path toward the second coming of Jesus as well as the rising of the Antichrist.

Captain Rayford Steele and his wife, Irene, are at odds about faith. Although Steele was raised to go to church and try to live a good life, the man never truly accepted Jesus as his savior. After Steele is involved in a near fatal accident, Irene turns to religion and becomes a zealot. Irene pressures Steele to change and it almost ruins their marriage. Irene's zealotry also prompts Steele to consider having an affair with Hattie Durham, a senior flight attendant.

A big turning point for Steele is the Rapture. The authors detail the chaos and terror revolving around the beginning of the end of the world when people disappear and ascend to Heaven, leaving non-believers behind.

Also present on the flight to London are Hattie Durham and Cameron "Buck" Williams, an ace reporter for the prestigious Global Weekly. As much as everyone tries to make sense of the happenings, even the savviest among them is confused and bewildered. It is only when the plane disembarks that things begin to make the slightest bit of sense.

After the event, which occurs while Steele was in flight, Steele realizes that his family is gone, proving that Irene's beliefs about being "called home" by Jesus were true. Steele seeks refuge with Bruce Barnes, a visitation pastor at the New Hope Village Church in Chicago. Even though Barnes is a pastor, his faith was not strong and in fact, the pastor had never truly accepted Jesus as his personal savior.

Barnes, along with Steele, is deeply affected by the Rapture and its aftermath. Steele goes to Barnes after he finds Irene and Raymie are gone. Barnes plays a recorded message from the senior pastor regarding the Rapture and its importance. Together, the doubting men become saved and experience a new level of faith never witnessed before.

Steele tries his hardest to convert his daughter Chloe as well as Hattie. Steele learns that he must witness without fear if he is going to save anyone.

While Williams struggles with his own lack of faith, the readers learn about Nicolae Carpathia, a man who quickly rises from a low level position in the Romanian government to become president of the country. Carpathia is clever and has a way of mesmerizing people worldwide. Carpathia's powers affect all but true believers and soon the man is named as the new Secretary General of the United Nations.

Williams becomes convinced that Carpathia is the Antichrist and is proven to be correct when Carpathia executes two high profile men and then makes everyone believe that it was a suicide.



By this time, Williams is the last of the group to fully accept Christ. As Carpathia continues to ascend to the pinnacle of the political and religious worlds, Williams returns to Chicago to pledge himself to the Tribulation Force, perhaps the only organization to see Carpathia's true self.



# Chapters 1-4

## Chapters 1-4 Summary

Chapter 1:

Rayford Steele is a pilot for Pan-Continental Airlines currently on an overnight flight to Heathrow Airport in London. Steele has a few things on his mind, including the family's plans for spring break, during which Steele, his wife, Irene, and their two children will spend time together.

The other thing on Steele's mind is the fact that he is becoming obsessed with Hattie Durham, a senior flight attendant. Hattie is beautiful, young, and perhaps most of all, is not obsessed with religion like Irene. No one could fault Steele for his attraction to Hattie. The pair have spent time together on a professional basis and Steele admires Hattie in many ways. Plus, she is a toucher. Steele likes that. It is never anything inappropriate, just a hand on the shoulder or a touch on the arm but still, Steele feels some chemistry with Hattie.

Steele has no beef with God. Steele was raised to go to church and to try to be a good person. It is simply that Steele never felt the need, deep inside himself, to totally commit to Jesus. After a near miss one night in the aircraft, Irene and Steele turned to friends and began to examine their religion. Steele stayed with his beliefs while Irene became a zealot, constantly preaching to Steele about being saved. Steele balked at the lectures even though he knew that Irene was only trying to help him. After a while, the topic typically led to silence and Steele found himself wanting to stay away from home more often.

Irene had attempted to explain the Rapture to Steele, who simply was not buying it—at least not in the literal sense.

Steele thinks about all of these things as he makes the pre-sunup rounds of the cabin.

On the same plane as Steele is Cameron "Buck" Williams, a senior writer at Global Weekly. Williams is unusual in the sense that he has become a senior writer at the age of 29, which is almost unheard of in the newspaper business. Now, at age 30, Williams continues to lead a charmed life. Williams gains his nickname from the fact that he is always "bucking" authority and tradition.

The authors reflect back on Williams' first major story the previous year. Williams had been assigned to interview Chaim Rosenzweig, a Nobel Prize winning scientist. Williams considers the meeting to be "the most bizarre event he had ever experienced." (Page 6)

Chaim Rosenzweig was a shoo-in for the cover of the issue of Global Weekly that would feature the Newsmaker of the Year on its cover. The staff at the Global Weekly tended



to shy away from the person most likely to be named Time's Man of the Year but in Rosenzweig's case, there was no other plausible choice. Williams immediately offered to take on the assignment, saying that Rosenzweig knew and trusted him. The other members of the writing staff were angry about the certainty that Williams would get the job.

Rosenzweig refers to himself as a botanist but is really more of a chemical engineer. Rosenzweig single-handedly changed the face of agriculture in the Middle East when he created a synthetic fertilizer that could turn desert sands into fertile ground.

Rosenzweig routinely calls the accomplishment, dubbed the Eden Project, something simple, although it clearly was not.

"Irrigation has been a problem for decades," the old man said. "But all that did was make the sand wet. My formula, added to the water, fertilizes the sand." (Page 8)

As a result of Rosenzweig's ingenuity, the Holy Land bloomed like Eden and quickly turned its focus toward agriculture. The country quickly became so rich that the unemployment levels dropped to zero and Israel became an export capital to be reckoned with on a global level.

Other countries chomp at the bit to get their hands on the formula. However, the only person privy to it is Rosenzweig. As a result, Rosenzweig is constantly surrounded by high level security.

Russia is determined to take over control of the Holy Land and as a result, intercontinental ballistic missiles are launched to take down the newly prosperous country. All of Israel goes into shock as the Russian planes rapidly approach. The Israeli government calls out for help even though it is obvious that it is too late. Russia has launched a Russian Pearl Harbor with no warning and no opportunity for negotiations of any kind. It was obvious that the end is near.

The authors describe the attack as a holocaust and detail the war scene through the eyes of Williams. In the end, not a single Israelite is harmed. The country's enemies, including other Middle Eastern countries, are effectively destroyed. Jewish scholars immediately turn to Scripture to explain what has happened. Williams knows that there is no way to convey the scene to Global Weekly's readers as he cannot even believe his own eyes. Williams comes to believe in God, however, is not yet ready to become a full-fledged Christian.

Rayford Steele has an undeniable urge to see Hattie and leaves the cockpit for a walk through. Hattie nearly runs Steele over as the pilot leaves the cockpit. Hattie is borderline hysterical. Hattie tells Steele that there are passengers missing. Steele says that it is not possible and that perhaps they got up to stretch or use the lav. Hattie explains that the people are gone and all have left their clothes behind.

Chapter 2



Steele thinks perhaps he had fallen asleep in the cockpit and is dreaming. It quickly becomes clear that Steele is not dreaming and that the entire plane is about to explode into utter chaos.

Steele slips into his role as commander of the aircraft and does the best job possible in keeping people calm and making a record of the events. Steele realizes that he does understand what is happening, that the Rapture has come. Irene was right all along.

Although the plane is in a remote area Steele manages to contact another pilot who is equally baffled by the events. Neither man knows what to say to passengers. Steele decides on the truth.

While Steele redirects the flight to return to O'Hare international Airport in Chicago, Williams is attempting to create an open modem line to be able to contact Steve Plank, his editor. It occurs to Williams that Plank may be among the missing and there is no way to find out. Hattie objects to Williams damaging the telephone to create a modem line but calms down when Williams promises to attempt to reach Hattie's people on the ground.

As the 747 approaches O'Hare, Steele notices that there is an influx of planes that have been rerouted. The runways are a disaster and they remind Steele of the condition they would be in enduring a Chicago blizzard. The passengers have to walk nearly 2 miles to the terminal after evacuating the plane via the emergency chutes. Steele begins to envy the passenger who was able to connect his modem. Steele begins to fear that he may never see Irene and the children again.

### Chapter 3:

Hattie and the other crew members start to evacuate the plane. Williams attempts to reassure the other passengers by being the first to use the emergency chute. It does not turn out to be so easy and Williams gets an abrasion on the back of his skull.

Steele refuses to take a ride on one of the transports so that there will be enough room for the elderly and disabled passengers. Smith, Steele's first officer, decides to take a ride and receives a dressing down from Steele. Hattie decides to walk the two-mile stretch with Steele.

When Steele arrives at the airport, the scene is even more chaotic than one could have expected. The hotels are already filled up and all of the phones are tied up by people trying to reach their loved ones. Steele and other crew members are second in line for telephone use after medical emergencies. The authors detail the experience of a woman going into labor. Midway through the delivery the baby disappears into thin air. CNN and other news stations cover similar disappearances. No one seems to know exactly what is happening at present.

Steele manages to call home, but gets the answering machine. There is a message from Chloe looking for the rest of her family. Steele is unable to reach Chloe.



Steele manages to get a seat aboard a helicopter able to take him home. Steele insists on taking Hattie, even though she is not a pilot. Once on the helicopter, Steele learns that Smith is dead. Steele's first officer commits suicide after learning that his wife and children are gone.

Williams manages to read his messages. There is a general staff memo from Plank, telling everyone to stay put and to keep in touch. Williams receives a second e-mail from Plank, telling him to ignore the first message and that, after handling any personal matters, Williams should get to New York as soon as possible. Plank outlines various possibilities about what may have happened. Plank also relays the news that there is a big conference in New York supposedly having to do with the new world order. Plank does not know any more than Williams but shares some ideas. Plank also talks about Carpathia and the fact that the charismatic Romanian has been invited to speak at the United Nations, an honor typically bestowed on world leaders.

Lastly, Plank attempts to make sense of the disappearances. "If I had to guess, I'm anticipating some God-awful ransom demand. I mean, it's not like these people who disappeared are dead. What in the world is going to happen to the life insurance industry? I'm not ready to start believing the tabloids." (Page 58)

#### Chapter 4:

A doctor approaches Williams and offers to dress the wound on his head. The doctor discusses the Rapture and before Williams can get a thorough explanation, it is the writer's turn to use the phone. Williams manages to get through to Plank's secretary in New York. Williams finds out that Hattie's family is fine, but receives no word on his own. Williams reflects on the doctor's opinion and searches for information on Carpathia, the man that managed to impress Rosenzweig.

Steele has to disembark from the helicopter when a medical emergency causes the pilot to land at a nearby hospital. Steele is about 5 miles from home and decides that it would be easier to hitchhike than to attempt get a cab. A woman picks him up and drives Steele to his house. Along the way the couple discusses the events of the last few hours.

Steele arrives home and discovers that Irene and Raymie are gone.

Williams finds information on Carpathia through an interview with Rosenzweig. Williams learns that Carpathia is a member of Romania's House of Deputies, a branch one step below the Senate. Rosenzweig, who seems to be enamored with the Romanian, claims that Williams will soon hear of Carpathia.

Williams approaches a member of the Pan-Continental staff and asks if there is any way he can get transportation to New York. The woman looks at Williams with incredulity but refers Williams to a private pilot after learning of his identity. At this point Williams does not care how much it costs to get back to New York.





Steele wanders through his house, trying to accept the fact that Irene and Raymie have disappeared.

## Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Rayford Steele is the main character in "Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" The life of a pilot has been good to Steele, affording him and the Steele family many luxuries. However, Steele finds himself having somewhat of a mid-life crisis and on the cusp of having an affair with Hattie Durham, a senior flight attendant 15 years his junior. Steele blames his potential affair on the fact that his wife, Irene, has become a religious fanatic.

The Steeles have two children, Chloe and Ray Jr., also known as "Raymie." Chloe is much older as Raymie was a surprise later on in the marriage. Chloe is the apple of Rayford's eye, strong, independent and inquisitive. Raymie tends to be more passive, a fact that does not please Steele.

Steele was raised to go to church and try to live a good life. However, Steele had never truly accepted Jesus as his savior. After Steele is involved a near fatal accident, Irene turns to religion and becomes a zealot. Irene pressures Steele to change and it almost ruins their marriage.

Steele realizes Irene is right when the Rapture occurs while he is piloting a flight to London. Only first hand experience with the Rapture is enough to change Steele and even then Steele does not completely commit to Christianity.

Williams' assignments are plum and evoke jealousy from his co-workers. Williams sees his life as being charmed, partly through hard work and ambition.

The Eden Project is a fascinating concept. The authors have chosen to use science to turn Israel into a veritable Eden, full of lush vegetation and the sudden ability to grow crops that are good enough to compete on the world market. The new status of Israel only heightens jealousy amongst its neighbors as well as Russia. Russia has long since been a dominant world power and wants to take Rosenzweig's formula to the next level. It is shocking to many that even after the Russian Pearl Harbor, Israel remains untouched. The launching of World War III, in addition to the disappearances of the people, shows the power of Jesus and His kingdom.

In Chapter 2 Steele attempts to come to grips with what is happening all around him. The situation becomes even clearer when Steele manages to converse with another pilot, and together they compare the number of missing people. The entire situation is unbelievable, even though the Steele believes he has the explanation. It is too difficult to digest.

Williams attempts to be helpful to the other passengers, while devising a way to get in touch with Steve Plank. Unlike many of the passengers, Williams uses his head to attempt to contact someone on the ground. Hattie does her best to do her job and



attempts to get Williams to stop dismantling the phone attached to the back of the seat in front of him. Williams consoles Hattie and eventually convinces the senior flight attendant that he might be able to find out what is going on if he can reach New York.

The authors do a good job of describing the catastrophe at O'Hare international Airport. The number of planes attempting to land at O'Hare is astronomical, many of which are on the verge of running out of fuel. Steele attempts to make the best of the situation and manages to keep calm, with hopes of keeping everyone else on the plane from becoming even more hysterical.

In Chapter 3, Steele and the crew manage to evacuate the plane and get people to safety. The confrontation between Steele and Smith is telling in that Smith is anxious to learn about his family rather than staying committed to the job. Smith's efforts are rewarded when the officer learns that his children are gone and his wife was killed in an accident. Smith's suicide is not surprising in light of the events.

Williams is able to get his e-mails and is relieved to know that Plank is all right. The news relayed by Plank is disturbing and Williams takes the opportunity to learn more about Carpathia and his role in the new world order. There is something suspicious about the man.

The authors relay that nearly all children and babies are taken during the Rapture. This is to be expected as children, and particularly babies, are metaphors for the innocent. It can also be seen as a metaphor for those who were saved, as being saved cleanses one of all sin.

Chapter 4 finds Steele attempting to cope with the disappearance of Irene and Raymie. Although Steele is frantic to reach Chloe, the grieving father knows that Chloe is alive and well. Steele's examination of the house is filled with grief and regret.

Williams manages to make peace with the Pan-Continental worker and gains the woman's admiration when she learns Williams' name. Williams' notoriety can be used to get to New York, especially when it is married to unlimited funds.



# Chapters 5-9

## Chapters 5-9 Summary

### Chapter 5:

Williams recalls the purpose of going to Chicago in the first place. Williams created bad blood with Global Weekly bureau chief, Lucinda Washington. From Chicago, Williams was scheduled to fly to London for a 10 day stay. All of sudden Williams is back in Chicago. Williams recounts the purpose of the trip to England. Williams was following a story regarding the financier Jonathan Stonagal, head of the London Stock exchange, Joshua Todd-Corthan, and a confab which was allegedly attempting to adopt a one world currency.

Steele hears from Hattie and relays the news about Irene and Raymie. Hattie says she still knows nothing about her family. The couple talks for a few minutes and Steele realizes the empty nature of his feelings toward the flight attendant.

Williams attempts to make arrangements with a private charter service and leaves a message. Williams manages to check his other messages and calls Hattie. Williams relays the news about Hattie's family and says that his father and brother are fine, although there is no word about his estranged sister-in-law and the children. Williams also calls Lucinda Washington to find that she has also disappeared leaving behind a child.

### Chapter 6:

Steele makes a stiff drink and thinks about a conversation he had had with Irene about drinking hard liquor. Irene did not want Raymie to know that Steele drank and Steele agreed. The drink helps Steele to sleep.

Steele begins to think about potential responsibilities with the airline. Steele also longs to be able to see the bodies of Irene and Raymie so that there may be some proof or at least some form of closure. The pilot goes through the events of the last day and questions the meaning of the Rapture. It is obvious to Steele that Raymie was spared through Irene's influence. Steele had always been proud of Chloe's independence and suddenly realized that his daughter had not been spared because of his influence.

Williams finds a hotel and manages to get through to his father. Buck's sister-in-law and the children have disappeared. The father and son have a fairly long conversation about the recent events, and Buck's part in writing the news coverage. Williams refuses to go into the religious meaning of the Rapture.

Williams receives a return call from the charter pilot and prepares to take off for New York in the morning.



Steele manages to get in touch with Chloe's roommate and finds out that Chloe is on her way back to Chicago. After Steele hangs up the phone, he reads an article in the newspaper about Carpathia and the 33-year-old's sudden rise to prominence.

#### Chapter 7:

Williams meets with Ken Ritz, the charter pilot. The men speak about the recent events and the possibility of intergalactic interference.

Steele decides to research the Bible to make sense of the Rapture as well as the scripture's take on the prophecy.

The closest Ritz can get to New York is Easton, Pennsylvania, a short distance outside Philadelphia. Williams will have to take the train into New York. Once at the offices of the Global Weekly, Williams realizes that he has been running on pure adrenaline and breaks down.

Steele manages to track down Chloe's whereabouts. Steele is alarmed because Chloe has been rerouted to some very unusual airports. Although Steele is worried for Chloe's safety he knows that Chloe will make every effort to get home and he will receive a call when it is time to pick up his daughter.

In Chapter 8, Williams learns that Carpathia has been elected to the Romanian presidency. Plank and Williams discuss Carpathia's sudden rise to power and how it may relate to the financial issues with Stonagal, Todd-Corthan and United Nations.

Steele is beside himself with worry and grief. The authors recount Steele's marriage to Irene and the birth of their children. Irene's conversion is also recounted.

Williams attempts to get in touch with his friend Dirk Burton and discovers that Burton's answering machine is full. Williams becomes concerned.

Hattie calls Williams and unloads her troubles. Next Hattie calls Steele and the couple speaks about their families.

#### Chapter 9:

Williams arrives at Steve Plank's office and is met with anger and resentment from the veteran editors. Plank clearly wants Williams to cover the possibly expansive changes in the religious community and the corresponding interaction with politics. Williams would take the place of Juan Ortiz, who serves as the chief of international politics. Ortiz claims that he has been following the activities of the Jewish Nationalists for many years and that he should be the one to write the story. The religion editor also weighs in and demands final approval on Williams' piece. Williams objects. Plank has already made up his mind that Williams will cover the story.



Steele continues to worry about Chloe and her impending arrival. Steele phones Irene's church and shortly after hanging up notices that Chloe has arrived. Steele breaks the news to Chloe about Irene and Raymie. Chloe is devastated.

Williams finally contacts somebody in London and finds that Burton is dead. Williams is told that Scotland Yard has declared Burton's death a suicide. Williams does not believe it.

Chloe and Steele discuss the events that have taken place over the last couple of days. Steele is amazed to learn that people in California are buying into alien invasion. Father and daughter discuss possible reasons for the events and what they might mean. Steele tells Chloe that the pastor of Irene's church has left a taped message for those left behind. Steele is anxious to check out the tape. Chloe is hesitant but agrees to go along, even if she just waits in the car.

## Chapters 5-9 Analysis

In chapter 5, the authors begin to explain the possibility of the new world order and what it might mean. The fact that Stonagal and Todd-Corthan are involved in the New York confab means that the summit is a serious one. This is confirmed by the fact that there are at least 10 world leaders involved as well. Williams is more desperate than ever to get back to New York so he can find out what is going on and to report the events to date.

Steele realizes that he was merely infatuated with Hattie and that his relationship with Irene and Raymie are far more important. There is a tremendous amount of guilt for his thoughts of the previous weeks and Steele wishes he had another chance.

Williams does not care that the charter flight may be frightfully expensive. At this point, Williams will do anything to get back to Global Weekly.

In chapter 6, Steele begins to fall into a pit of grief and despair. While some small part of Steele is glad that Irene and Raymie have been spared, it becomes clear that his influence on Chloe has kept her from ascending and that perhaps it might be too late for one or both of them.

Williams is relieved to get through to his father. Williams is concerned about his brother Jeff and sympathizes over the fact that his estranged sister-in-law and the children are missing. Williams is exhausted and takes the few minutes to speak with his father about the news coverage, but does not want to talk about the religious connotations of the disappearances.

Steele is introduced to the existence of Nicolae Carpathia but does not put much stock in the rising star of Romania. As a result of the recent events, Steele believes that Carpathia's promises of reform will mean little to nothing.



In chapter 7 Williams manages to catch a flight to Pennsylvania where he can catch a train to New York. It suddenly hits Williams that the recent events have taken a much greater toll on him than expected. Williams is physically and mentally exhausted. No one is surprised when Williams becomes emotional.

Although Steele knows Chloe is capable of taking care of herself, the fatherly instincts take over. Steele's connections with the airline allow him to get information about Chloe's flight schedule. Steele is practically going out of his mind with worry and grief.

Chapter 8 is focused on Nicolae Carpathia and the man's sudden rise to power. His popularity is attributed to his charisma and promises for country-wide reform. However, it is clear that there is something bigger going on when Romania's president steps down so that Carpathia can hold the office.

In Chapter 9, Williams learns more about Carpathia and the activities of the Jewish Nationalists. The other writers and editors are angry that Plank is taking away what should be their stories to hand them to Williams. Finally, one editor makes peace by saying it is obvious Plank has made up his mind and there is no point in causing an argument.

Steele begins to turn a religious corner in this chapter. Steele becomes intrigued by the fact that the pastor of New Hope Village Church has recorded a tape for those left behind. Steele, in need of some explanation, asks Chloe to go to the church with him. Chloe becomes worried that they will be faced with religious zealots and that Steele may even become one of them, just like Irene.



# Chapters 10-13

## Chapters 10-13 Summary

Williams decides to contact Alan Tompkins, a friend at Scotland Yard, once he arrives in London. Williams is worried that the current phone situation might compromise safety and it is important to have privacy when speaking about Burton's murder. Williams finally gets in touch with Tompkins and explains the possible homicide of Burton. Tompkins asks Williams to come to Scotland Yard to discuss the matter.

Steele calls Bruce Barnes, the visitation pastor at New Hope Village Church and asks to hear the tape left by the pastor.

Tompkins meets Williams at Scotland Yard and the pair goes to a pub where there is more privacy. Tompkins warns Williams that there is something big brewing and that Williams needs to stay away. Tompkins reminds Williams that Burton was a conspiracy theorist. Williams recalls Burton sniffing around Joshua Todd-Corthan's activities, convinced that his boss was a member of the Council of Ten or the Council of Wise Men. Tompkins says that is why Burton was murdered. The killers placed the gun in Burton's right hand, which was a fatal error as Burton was left-handed. Williams is shocked when Tompkins says he will not pursue it. Tompkins knows if he follows up, he will also end up dead. Tompkins says that he has already been threatened.

Tompkins arranged a meeting with Todd-Corthan who basically threatened Tompkins and said the inspector needed to ensure that Williams was kept out of the way. Todd-Corthan even goes so far as to call Tompkins' commander who basically says Todd-Corthan is free to kill Tompkins.

Williams makes arrangements to fly back to New York under an assumed name while Tompkins goes to get the car. The door of the pub is blown off its hinges as Tompkins' car explodes.

Williams catches a cab to Heathrow, leaving everything behind.

Chapter 11: Steele is glad to get Chloe out of the house. Father and daughter have been cooped up in the house consumed with grief. Steele and Chloe have a long conversation on the way to church. Chloe decides to go into the church with Steele and they meet Bruce Barnes. Chloe openly doubts the concept of the Rapture and makes several snide remarks. Barnes tells Chloe not to be rude and to allow him to finish the story. Barnes relays his take on the Rapture and how he discovered that his wife was gone. Barnes also relays that his children are gone. Barnes fled to the church where he met Loretta and together they watched the Rapture tape left by the head pastor.

Barnes confesses his lack of complete faith and Steele finds himself being able to relate to the man. Barnes asks Steele and Chloe if they are willing to accept Jesus as their



savior. Steele is still skeptical and Chloe refuses. Steele receives a copy of the Rapture tape from Barnes.

Chapter 12:

Williams arrives safely in Frankfurt and calls his father to assure him that everything is alright despite news to the contrary.

On the way home, Chloe says she is not interested in watching the tape and that she is worried Steele is going to become a zealot. According to Chloe religion is a personal thing, not a family or group thing. Steele asks Chloe to go to church the next day in case he decides to become a Christian. Chloe balks.

Steele watches the Rapture tape and is somewhat confused until the prophecy is explained thoroughly by the pastor. Steele also becomes familiar with the concept of the Antichrist. Steele has a revelation and becomes a Christian.

Williams arrives in New York and learns that Carpathia wants to speak to him. Plank tells Williams that Rosenzweig is with Carpathia. Williams is thrilled and knows that if someone is above the international terrorists in London, it will be Carpathia.

Steele is anxious to get to church the next morning. Chloe refuses to go, saying she is not ready. Barnes addresses the congregation and discusses the events of the Rapture. Steele officially accepts Christ as his Savior.

After the service Steele joins Barnes for lunch. Barnes asks Steele to join a Bible study group. Steele accepts.

Chloe admits that she has not watched the tape and although she has no interest in the subject she agrees to watch it if it will make her father happy. Chloe tells Steele that Hattie has called several times. When Steele calls Hattie she tells him that Buck Williams is dead.

Chapter 13: Buck Williams sits outside JFK Airport reading his obituary. The official report from Scotland Yard is that Northern Ireland's terrorists killed Tompkins and Williams out of retribution.

Steele intends to have another conversation with Chloe about religion.

Williams meets up with Plank at the airport. Williams is more eager than ever to meet with Carpathia. Plank tells Williams about Carpathia's charisma and the ability to speak many languages fluently. Plank also relates that the nine languages spoken by Carpathia are the six official languages of the United Nations as well as the three languages of Romania. According to Plank, Carpathia is surrounded mostly by nobodies save for Rosenzweig.





Steele and Chloe head for Atlanta and meet several people who recount their experiences during the Rapture. Along the way Steele confesses to Chloe about his almost relationship with Hattie.

Williams and Plank go to visit Carpathia at the UN. The authors describe Carpathia's manner and commanding presence. Carpathia's speech is covered during which the man speaks about the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United States, the British Commonwealth, the USSR and the summit known as the Dumbarton Oaks conference. Carpathia also goes on to show intimate knowledge of the United Nations and its inner workings in order to impress the audience.

## Chapters 10-13 Analysis

Williams gets the whole story from Tompkins regarding Burton's death, the conspiracy, and the power wielded by Todd-Corthan. Williams is determined to move ahead with his investigation while Tompkins backs down. Tompkins' family has already been threatened and it is clear that Todd-Corthan has no qualms about murdering an inspector from Scotland Yard. The depth and breadth of the conspiracy hits home when Tompkins' car is blown up and Tompkins is killed. Williams is grateful that he had already booked a flight under an assumed name.

In chapter 11, the reader is subjected to a more thorough discussion regarding the Rapture and its meaning. It is clear that the events have deeply affected many people including a pastor who should have ascended along with his family and who attempts to convince Steele and Chloe that it is not too late to ascend. Chloe is rude and makes several snide remarks regarding Barnes' story and beliefs. Chloe starts to realize that Barnes is an intelligent man and not simply a zealot. Regardless of the conversation, Chloe remains unconvinced and Steele remains skeptical. There is a great deal of emotion involved in hearing Barnes' story, which relates to the general experiences of those left behind.

In chapter 12, Steele begins to worry that it might be too late to redeem himself as a Christian. There are some things that alarm Steele although the balance of the Rapture tape eases any of those fears. The promises offered in the Scripture are music to Steele's ears and Steele finds himself taking Christ as his savior. The conversion is a relief in many ways. Chloe remains skeptical to the point of hostility. Although Chloe loves Steele, it is clear that the girl wants no part of religion unless she can prove it is wrong.

Williams is thrilled to learn that Carpathia wants to meet with him. Seeing Rosenzweig is an added bonus. Once again, Williams puts a great deal of faith in Rosenzweig and his recommendations. The authors foreshadow that this opinion may not be wise.

In chapter 13, Williams and Plank attend Carpathia's speech at the UN. Carpathia is captivating and convincing in his speech, demonstrating knowledge of the UN and the global economy. The authors lead the reader to believe that Carpathia's position is not

altogether what it seems. Williams predicts that Carpathia will be quickly embraced by the world.



# Chapters 14-17

## Chapters 14-17 Summary

Chapter 14: Steele and Chloe return to Chicago. Father and daughter make dinner plans and Steele asks if Hattie might join them.

At the press conference following Carpathia's speech at the UN, Williams is the center of attention. Many people, including Rosenzweig, are happy to see Williams. Other reporters are not. Rosenzweig says he will arrange for a meeting between Williams and Carpathia despite the President's hectic schedule. Williams notices that Carpathia has excellent eyesight and is surprised when the Romanian President recognizes him in the crowd. Carpathia attempts to put a scientific spin on the Rapture. Carpathia says he does not condemn people for believing that the events are religious in nature, but that he does not subscribe to the belief. Williams is also shocked to learn that Carpathia is invited to speak at a large, ecumenical religious gathering later that month.

Williams begins to relate Stonagal's plans to Carpathia. Despite Plank's warnings, Williams decides to trust Carpathia.

Steele arrives home to find that the house has been burgled. The cops tell Steele that crime has shot up 200% over the last week and that the criminals know there is no way the police can stop all of them. Chloe is visibly shaken and asks Steele to get another copy of the Rapture tape.

Chapter 15: Williams checks his messages and finds one from Hattie and one from Tompkins' boss at Scotland Yard. Shortly after, Williams receives a call from Interpol. Williams decides to pretend he never heard the messages, while wondering if he could be extradited to Britain.

Chloe goes along with Steele to pick up another tape from Barnes. Barnes is surprised that Chloe wants to watch the tape.

Williams learns that the NYPD is looking for him and he is not ready to meet with police. Williams and Plank go to Marge's house to watch the Carpathia interview on Nightline. Carpathia briefly explains his plans for the UN. Carpathia wants to replace temporary members of the UN and install 10 permanent members instead of the current five members: the United States, Russia, France, China, and Britain. Carpathia denies wanting a leadership role and claims to be interested only in creating a global community.

Steele and Chloe watch the Nightline interview with Carpathia. Hattie calls shortly after and asks to work a New York flight so she can see Williams and possibly meet Carpathia. Steele confides to Hattie that he had feelings for her and wanted a relationship. Steele and Hattie get into an argument and Hattie refuses to see Steele again.



Chapter 16: Plank and Williams switch identities with the hopes that Plank will be intercepted, clearing the way for Williams to get to Carpathia. As planned, Plank is arrested even though another reporter identifies him as Steve Plank. Even though Carpathia is incommunicado, Williams reaches Rosenzweig and arranges to meet for the interview. Williams gets into an altercation with a fellow reporter attempting to muscle his way in on the Carpathia interview. The other reporter is brushed off and Williams gets his audience with Carpathia.

Steele feels bad about the argument with Hattie and worries about communicating with Chloe before it is too late.

Williams is surprised when Carpathia addresses him as Buck and is even more surprised when Carpathia knows the origin of the nickname. While the men are talking Carpathia receives a call from the President of the United States. The president invites Carpathia to the White House.

Williams is impressed with Carpathia's candor and is once again surprised when Carpathia says he knows Buck is in deep trouble. Williams is mesmerized by Carpathia and believes it when the leader tells him that any involvement with Stonagal and Todd-Corthan was legitimate and that Carpathia is not involved in any conspiracy. Carpathia also tells Williams he is wanted by Scotland Yard in the death of Tompkins and that there are witnesses that will testify to Williams planting the bomb in Tompkins' car.

Then Carpathia goes on to discuss the power of money, attempting to convince Williams of its importance.

Steele continues to suffer from insomnia and is overwhelmed with fresh grief.

Chapter 17:

Chloe attempts to reassure Steele that she will take the right path as soon she is ready. Steele turns on the television and watches a report on CNN. The reports concern a group of two men preaching at the Wailing Wall. It is also announced that Williams has been cleared in the investigation regarding Tompkins' death.

## Chapters 14-17 Analysis

Chapter 14 details the interview between Williams and Carpathia. Once again Carpathia shows great knowledge about the United Nations, including its history and purpose. Williams continues to be impressed with Carpathia and begins to understand why Rosenzweig is fond of the man. The authors hint that Williams is mesmerized by Carpathia. It is clear that Carpathia has some unusual power over those willing to listen. Williams is also surprised that Carpathia knows about Tompkins, and gets the sense that Carpathia is one of the few people that will be able to help him.

This chapter also foreshadows Carpathia's future involvement in the United Nations and in creating a one world community.



In chapter 15, Williams learns more about the United Nations and Carpathia's potential role. It is somewhat unusual that a high-level journalist would not know some of the information given to Williams, even though the man is not a political or financial writer.

Plank is instrumental in helping Williams evade police until he can have the interview with Carpathia.

Chapter 16 details the meeting between Williams and Carpathia. The presence of Rosenzweig helps to instill confidence in Williams. The fervor surrounding Carpathia is catching and Williams finds himself captivated by the man. Carpathia explains his plans for the UN, including the adoption of a one world currency and global government. Although the topic is not in Williams' sphere, the plan seems to make sense. The speech by Carpathia is definitely a sign that the comment about not assuming leadership is a lie and that Carpathia's plan mirrors Biblical prophecy.

Steele continues to struggle with Chloe's lack of belief as well as his overwhelming grief regarding Irene and Raymie.

In chapter 17 Chloe hints that she is leaning toward Christianity, but that she simply needs more time. Despite Chloe's lack of belief, she is there for Steele in his hour of need.

The news reports on CNN show an uprising in the Middle East. There is no violence, but people are beginning to preach the Word of Christ even in areas that are predominantly Jewish. The second news report regarding Williams gives the readers an idea of the authority and influence exercised by Carpathia. It also leaves the readers to wonder what kind of payment Carpathia will expect in return from Williams.



# Chapters 18-22

## Chapters 18-22 Summary

Chapter 18:

Plank drops a bombshell on Williams by saying that he is leaving the paper and Williams will be the new editor. Williams does not want the job. Plank convinces Williams to take the job with the understanding that Williams could assign himself the best stories. Williams considers it.

Williams expresses disbelief that Plank would go to work as a press secretary for Nicolae Carpathia. Plank is taken by Carpathia and the man's rapid rise to power. Williams is skeptical but Plank insists that Carpathia is the biggest and best thing the world has seen. Williams is facetious about Carpathia assuming world dominance and Plank says it is possible. Plank is most amazed that Carpathia is receiving the attention and power in spite of himself and that people are simply taken with Carpathia and his ideas. The men also discuss how Carpathia's power will soon put him above Stonagal, even though the financier is a supporter.

Plank assures Williams that he will always have access to Carpathia.

Marge tells the men to turn on the TV and tune it to CNN. The report on the news is about Eli and Moishe, the two heretical preachers stationed at the Wailing Wall. The news reporter states that the men have been heckled by the crowd, who want to know if why, they are so knowledgeable, they have not ascended? The preachers are eventually attacked by two men. One man carries an Uzi and the other a bayonet-style knife thought to have been taken from an Israeli military rifle. Before the men reach the preachers, they both collapse from some unseen force. The preachers continue their sermon, proclaiming Jesus as King.

Plank prepares to leave for JFK International Airport and tells Williams not to take too long in accepting the job offer.

Chloe and Steele wait for Hattie at the airport. Chloe says if she were in Hattie's shoes, she would not show up, so it is a good thing that Hattie will not be expecting the meeting.

Chloe warns Steele that Hattie is most likely hurt and angry and most likely will not be receptive to Steele's religious conversion. The father and daughter analyze the relationship between Hattie and Steele.

Hattie rushes to meet Williams, brimming with excitement. Williams quickly realizes that Hattie is not interested in him when she immediately asks to meet Carpathia. Although Williams feels stupid about making such a promise, Carpathia agrees to meet Hattie.



The entire way to Carpathia's hotel, Williams mentally berates himself for tainting his own integrity.

Carpathia speaks to Williams first, about Plank's new role in the organization. Carpathia also discusses the events at the Wailing Wall and how he finds it interesting that the two men died of heart attacks. Williams and Carpathia also discuss the death of Eric Miller, the reporter that attempted to scoop Williams on the meeting with Carpathia.

Hattie meets Carpathia and is enthralled by the man. Despite Hattie's usual cool demeanor, she giggles like a schoolgirl when Carpathia kisses her cheeks. Williams is stunned when Hattie says Carpathia gave out his phone numbers. Hattie suggests eating at the Pan-Con Club so that she can brag about meeting Carpathia. Williams asks if Hattie is trying to make someone jealous. Hattie says that is the plan.

Williams returns a call to Miller's widow who is attempting to make sense of the reporter's death. According to the widow, Miller would not have simply fallen off a ferry and drowned.

Williams checks out the phone number Carpathia had given to Hattie and discovers that it is the private number of the Secretary General of the United Nations. Williams is baffled. Williams calls Plank and says he knows about Carpathia's upcoming announcement regarding the appointment at the UN. Plank asks Williams to sit on the news for a day. Williams agrees and then tells Plank that he is taking over the editorial job at Global Weekly.

In chapter 19, Steele and Chloe are at the Pan-Con Club. Steele thinks about the turbulent relationship with Hattie and the eagerness to share his revelation with Hattie. People start looking at Steele strangely when he reads the Bible at every opportunity. Steele is still worried about Chloe but knows he cannot push her. Steele calls Barnes for support and is told to watch the news report about the men at the Wailing Wall. Barnes also tells Steele to witness without shame.

Williams stops by the Global Weekly to pick up an equipment bag and is called into the boss' office. Bailey, the boss, has hard questions for Plank and Williams. Bailey surprises both men by what he knows about the situation with Carpathia. Plank reluctantly tells Bailey Carpathia's plans and how the current Secretary General will be required to step down and install Carpathia in the job if he wants the Eden project.

Bailey agrees that Carpathia is brilliant and has made more advancement than ever thought possible. Plank outlines the other plans such as a seven year peace treaty with Israel and a new center for world religion.

Williams asks if any of it seems shaky to anyone else.

Chapter 20: Hattie finally rushes into the Pan-Con Club in time to tell Steele about the meeting with Carpathia. Steele lets Hattie go, knowing that he deserves it.



Williams apologizes profusely to Hattie and asks for an introduction to Steele and Chloe.

Hattie and Steele go off to have a talk while Williams is left to get to know Chloe. Williams is immediately smitten with the girl and for the first time in a long time, is shy and clumsy.

Steele pours his heart out to Hattie who gives in and cries, despite her vow not to do so. Steele is brutally honest about his lust for Hattie and it is hard for the woman to take. Hattie asks for a few moments to pull herself together. Steele prepares to witness to Hattie.

Williams and Chloe hit it off. Chloe tells Williams that her father has interesting theories on the disappearances. Williams and Chloe discuss age and decide to ignore the ten year age difference. Chloe asks about Carpathia and Williams relays their meetings.

Hattie returns to the table and Steele witnesses to her, asking only that she consider the information and watch the tape.

Chapter 21: Williams looks forward to interviewing Steele almost as much as he wants to spend more time with Chloe. Williams stops at the office and Bailey asks how soon he can get to Chicago to replace Lucinda Washington. Williams says he can go soon but does not want to miss the next day's events at the UN.

Williams manages to book a flight on Steele's route to Chicago the following day, choosing the only seat left in first class—the one next to Chloe.

Williams, Steele, Hattie and Chloe go to dinner at an elegant restaurant. Steele notices chemistry between Williams and Chloe. Williams has a difficult time concentrating as Steele shares the experience on the flight as well as his conversion and the Rapture.

There is a lengthy conversation between Williams and Steele regarding Steele's conversion and what it might mean to the future. Steele's devout nature causes Chloe to cry and even affects Williams. At the end of the meeting, Steele recommends that Williams speak to Bruce Barnes.

The party goes their separate ways in the lobby. Chloe stays behind to tell Williams she will miss him. Williams does not reveal that he will be on her flight in the morning.

Chapter 22: Williams spends a lot of time considering what Steele had to say. Steele's position gives him credibility. Williams is baffled that even after the attack on Israel, he is not able to go the rest of the way and devote himself to Christ.

Chloe is shocked to see Williams on the plane. Chloe tells the story of her conversion the night before and how she finally understands what her father had been experiencing as a new convert. Chloe sends a message to Steele in the cockpit and tells him the good news about her new faith in Christ.





## Chapters 18-22 Analysis

Chapter 18: Things begin moving very fast in the world. The news of Plank's sudden departure shocks Williams, who does not want the editor's responsibility. Plank informs Williams of the alternatives and knows that the star reporter will accept, particularly after Plank points out that Williams could end up working for one of the other reporters, most of whom dislike Williams for his ambitious and aggressive style.

Once again, the reader witnesses prophecy as the two men attempt to injure or kill the preachers at the Wailing Wall. The preachers seem certain that Jesus is ready to return to earth and that none of His followers will be harmed. This is shown in a literal sense when the armed men collapse at the preachers' feet.

The reader begins to see Carpathia's ulterior motives when he speaks with Williams about the Wailing Wall and then gives his phone numbers to Hattie. Hattie is thrilled, thinking that Carpathia is flirting with her. That is true but it is clear that Carpathia wants Williams to find out about the appointment to the UN. Readers can discern that the appointment has come from Rosenzweig's support of Carpathia, seen in his willingness to assist the current Secretary General by handing over the formula for the Eden project.

In chapter 19, the crux of Carpathia's plan comes to light. The plans have Williams concerned as he begins to put together that people who get too close to Carpathia end up dead. Bailey and Plank think Williams is overreacting. The plans will be carefully orchestrated so it appears that they are not Carpathia's main focus. However, the reader can relate all of Carpathia's plans to that of the Antichrist. So far, no one has learned of the plans and so Carpathia is still able to keep his secrets.

Chapter 20 details the heart to heart talk between Hattie and Steele as well as the meeting between Williams and Chloe. It is clear that Chloe is embarrassed by Steele's fervor and is grateful to leave as he witnesses to Hattie. There is mutual attraction between Chloe and Williams. Both know the age difference is a factor and neither seems to care.

In chapter 21, Williams, Steele, Hattie and Chloe have dinner at an upscale restaurant. Steele takes Barnes' advice and along with answering Williams' questions, witnesses with great excitement and surety. The testimony deeply affects Williams and Chloe. Steele thinks Chloe is crying because of embarrassment, not because she has had an epiphany.

Chapter 22 finds Williams and Chloe both contemplating their ideas on faith. Steele is ecstatic when Chloe says she now believes in Jesus and that she finally understands. Steele is relieved that he listened to God's advice to be patient.



# Chapters 23-25

## Chapters 23-25 Summary

Chapter 23:

Williams makes an appointment with Bruce Barnes before visiting the Chicago office of Global Weekly. Williams finds that Lucinda Washington's former assistant had simply assumed Washington's old post. Williams tells the woman that she should not switch offices just yet and he will make an announcement about the new bureau chief. Williams spends time in Washington's old office, interviewing key personnel.

Late in the day, Williams learns that there is a live report on CNN from the United Nations. Carpathia has been elected as the new Secretary-General at the UN. According to the reports, Carpathia is reluctant to take the post. Reporters interview the outgoing Secretary-General, who insists he would have stepped down even if Carpathia had not accepted the position.

The reporters also announce Plank's press release regarding Carpathia's reluctance to take the post and the concessions that would have to be made on Carpathia's behalf.

The authors reiterate Plank's statements with more detail, including the disarmament, the peace treaty with Israel and the change in the membership of the UN.

Williams has a conversation with Plank. The two men talk about the news. Plank tells Williams about the new advisers at the UN, including Stonagal and Todd-Corthan. Carpathia also wants to see Williams at a gathering of the Security Council. Williams is shocked to learn that he is the only member of the press to be invited to the summit. Plank also asks Williams to bring Hattie. Williams objects to playing pimp but agrees to ask.

Chloe and Steele meet with Barnes. Barnes is thrilled to learn about Chloe's conversion and desire to join the church's core group. Barnes also talks about the Tribulation and Chloe jokes that it might be difficult for people to sign up as martyrs.

The trio discusses the importance of creating a core group that is 100% committed. Chloe dubs it the Tribulation Force.

Barnes talks about the Antichrist and how, eventually, the Antichrist's followers will be pressured to take the mark of the beast.

Williams meets with Barnes to discuss the Rapture and the recent events in the world. Barnes is courteous but says he has no time for anything beyond the church, that they live in perilous times. Williams says it is not entirely business, that he is in a place where he needs to know what to do. Barnes and Williams spend hours together, during which Williams tells his whole story, from the attack on Israel to the experiences during and



after the Rapture. Barnes also gives Williams a crash course in prophecy. As the teaching spreads out over the course of the evening, Williams becomes filled with dread. If the prophecy is correct, then Williams has no other option than to believe Carpathia is the Antichrist. Reluctantly, Williams shares this information with Barnes.

The men discuss the possibility of Carpathia being the Antichrist and Barnes also believes it. Barnes warns Williams against facing Carpathia without God, that by doing so, Williams will face mortal and spiritual danger. Barnes asks if Williams would like to join the Tribulation Force. Williams wants more information first and asks Barnes where he can find a Bible. Barnes gives Williams a Bible. During the meeting of the Tribulation Force the next day, Barnes tells the story of the evening before. The group prays for Williams' soul and his safety.

Chapter 24:

Williams has a cryptic conversation with Plank during which Williams figures out that Stonagal is the mover and shaker behind Carpathia. Plank also warns Williams about drawing conclusions that may get him killed, just like Eric Miller.

Williams attends New Hope Village Church the next morning but does not wait for Chloe. Williams is preoccupied with the next day's meeting at the UN. Williams calls Hattie to try to talk her out of going to New York but Hattie refuses.

Williams gets to the meeting on Monday morning and with every passing moment becomes more and more afraid. Just before the meeting starts, Williams excuses himself, goes to the restroom and pledges himself to God. Only then can Williams face the group of people in the conference room.

Williams is shocked to see Hattie as she takes the seat next to Carpathia marked "personal assistant."

Chapter 25: One by one, Carpathia announces each of his new Cabinet members along with their positions. Williams is shocked when Carpathia welcomes him to the team. At that moment, Williams is nearly swept away by Carpathia. When Carpathia approaches Stonagal with the same speech, Stonagal is incensed that Carpathia should treat him like a subordinate. After a few minutes, Stonagal still refuses to cower to Carpathia. Carpathia proceeds to shoot and kill both Stonagal and Todd-Corthan, telling the rest of the room that the men were responsible for murders in England. The act also proves that Carpathia is afraid of no man. Carpathia exercises his power to make everyone in the room believe that the men committed suicide. Only Williams is immune to Carpathia's spell.

After the pre-press conference meeting, Williams is chastised by Plank and Bailey for not showing up at either event. Williams argues but there is nothing the new editor can say that will convince the men that he was there and saw the whole thing. Bailey wants to send Williams to Chicago in lieu of firing him for such an unforgivable and unprofessional stunt. Williams gives up trying to explain.



Williams books a flight to Chicago and meets with Barnes, Steele, and Chloe. Williams wants to join the Tribulation Force. Williams is accepted and the group is on its way.

## Chapters 23-25 Analysis

In chapter 23, Williams comes to fully comprehend the meaning of the Rapture and Carpathia's role as the Antichrist. Although there is confusion regarding the identity of the Antichrist, it has been suggested that it could be a group rather than a single person.

Barnes' willingness to help Williams is what saves Williams' life. Williams realizes that he cannot meet with Carpathia without God.

Chapter 24 details Williams' quest to find a new bureau chief in Chicago. While the job is important, it fades beside Williams' interest in Carpathia.

Williams continues to investigate Carpathia and makes a feeble attempt to deter Hattie from going to New York. Hattie is rude and insists on going to see Carpathia, regardless of what Williams says.

When Williams arrives at the pre-press conference, he is shocked to see Hattie has assumed the role of Carpathia's personal assistant. Williams knows Hattie is lost.

Chapter 25 further expands on Williams' beliefs regarding Carpathia. The beliefs become even stronger after Williams talks to Plank. Williams no longer has any doubt about Carpathia's true nature.

Williams ducks out just before the meeting is scheduled to start and devotes himself to God. During the meeting, Williams realizes that Barnes is 100% right and if he had gone to the meeting without God, he would have been among the mesmerized people who believed whatever Carpathia told them to believe.

Williams is shocked by the murders of Stonagal and Todd-Corthan. The act clearly shows the depth of Carpathia's evil. The fact that neither Plank nor Bailey will believe Williams shows Carpathia's far reaching power. Williams knows that the only people he can turn to are Barnes and the Steele, who greet him with open arms.

# Characters

## Jesus

Jesus is considered to be the living embodiment of the Supreme Being of the universe, most commonly referred to as God. Jesus may also be seen as belonging to the Holy Trinity - the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Jesus was born in Nazareth, in the province of Galilee circa 5 B.C.E. Little is known about Jesus' life as a child except that he was the son of a carpenter and also practiced the same vocation. In Jesus' late twenties, he met John the Baptist and was baptized. Jesus then began his own ministry.

The story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is recounted in the New Testament. Jesus' purpose on earth was to teach the world about the Kingdom of God and one's place in it, should one choose to embrace the Father and follow the teachings of Christianity.

In "Left Behind," Jesus is a controversial figure in that Nicolae Carpathia is trying to get the masses to denounce Jesus in favor of a new world order. Christians become targets and Christian figures, both political and theological, become targets of the new regime.

## Rayford Steele

Rayford Steele is the main character in "Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Steele is a former Air Force pilot turned commercial pilot for Pan-Continental Airlines. The life of a pilot has been good to Steele, affording him and the Steel family many luxuries. However, Steele finds himself having somewhat of a mid-life crisis and on the cusp of having an affair with Hattie Durham, a senior flight attendant that is 15 years his junior. Steele blames his potential affair on the fact that his wife, Irene, has become a religious fanatic.

The Steeles have two children, Chloe and Ray Jr., also known as "Raymie." Chloe is much older as Raymie was a surprise later on in the marriage. Chloe is the apple of Rayford's eye—strong, independent and inquisitive. Raymie tends to be more passive, a fact that does not please Steele.

Steele was raised to go to church and try to live a good life. However, Steele has never truly accepted Jesus as his savior. After Steele is involved a near fatal accident, Irene turns to religion and becomes a zealot. Irene pressures Steele to change and it almost ruins their marriage.

A big turning point for Steele is the Rapture. After the event, which occurs while Steele is in flight, Steele realizes that his family is gone, proving that Irene's beliefs about being "called home" by Jesus were true. Steele seeks refuge with Bruce Barnes and, together,



the doubting men become saved. As a result, Barnes, Steele and Chloe form the Tribulation Force.

## **Nicolae Carpathia**

Nicolae Carpathia is a charismatic religious leader who intends to take over the world. Carpathia becomes the Supreme Potentate of the United Nations and reorganizes the agency to become the Global Community. Carpathia is the Antichrist.

## **Chaim Rosenzweig**

Chaim Rosenzweig is a scientist credited with creating a revolutionary fertilization and irrigation system, known as the Eden project.

## **Hattie Durham**

Hattie Durham is a flight attendant and the object of Rayford Steel's affections. Hattie eventually leaves the airline and goes to work as a personal assistant to Carpathia, with whom she becomes romantically involved.

## **Irene Steele**

Irene Steele is Rayford Steele's wife.

## **Chloe Steele**

Chloe Steele is Rayford and Irene Steele's daughter. Chloe becomes one of the founders of the Tribulation Force.

## **Alan Tompkins**

Alan Tompkins is a friend of Buck's that works at Scotland Yard.

## **Bruce Barnes**

Bruce Barnes is pastor of Chicago's New Hope Village Church. Barnes is a non-believer who comes to believe in Christ after losing his family. Barnes becomes one of the founders of the Tribulation Force.



## **Joshua Todd-Corthan**

Joshua Todd-Corthan is the head of the London Stock Exchange, credited with the murder of Alan Tompkins. Todd-Corthan also attempts to assassinate Buck and is executed by Carpathia.

## **Cameron Williams**

Cameron "Buck" Williams is a 30 year old hot shot senior writer and reporter with Global Weekly. Williams interviews Chaim Rosenzweig and becomes deeply involved in the protection of Christians under attack by Carpathia. Williams is one of the founders of the Tribulation Force and creator of the underground webzine, "The Truth."

## **Steve Plank**

Steve Plank is Cameron "Buck" Williams' editor at the newspaper Globe Weekly. Plank eventually leaves the newspaper to become the press secretary for Carpathia.

## **Jonathan Stonagal**

Jonathan Stonagal is a high level financier and cohort to Joshua Todd-Corthan. Stonagal is executed by Carpathia.

## **Tsion Ben-Judah**

Tsion Ben-Judah is a highly influential rabbinical scholar who turns to Christianity.



# Objects/Places

## The Tribulation Force

The Tribulation Force is a group founded by Rayford Steele, Bruce Barnes, Cameron "Buck" Williams and Chloe Steele. Rayford Steele acts as the group's leader. The name for the group comes from Chloe Steele, referring to the seven year period following the Rapture known as the Tribulation. At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will return to the earth and uphold His promises to Israel.

The Tribulation Force is formed shortly after the Rapture when it becomes clear to the group that the world is nearing its final days. The Force strongly believes in scripture and quickly realizes that Nicolae Carpathia, the new head of the United Nations, is the Antichrist. Carpathia intends to take over the world, denounce Jesus Christ and force his followers to accept the Mark of the Beast. Carpathia is a cold blooded killer and megalomaniac.

Based in Chicago, the Tribulation Force will do what is necessary to stop Carpathia, even if it means breaking one of the commandments and murdering the man. Each member of the Force has special skills to lend, such as Steele's role as a pilot and Williams' talents as a senior writer and publisher with Global Weekly and eventually, publisher of the underground webzine, "The Truth."

The main goal of the tribulation Force is to protect the new believers, known as "Tribulation Saints" and to stop Carpathia the Antichrist.

## Rapture

The Rapture is considered to be a futuristic event in Christianity as predicted in Revelation. The Rapture is said to be when Jesus Christ will return to the earth amid great fanfare and triumph to "call home" his people—Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. According to Revelation 1:7 in the New Testament, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (King James Version)

There are different beliefs regarding the Rapture. While some believe that the second coming will be one event during which Jesus will descend to the earth among angels and the glory of Heaven, other believe that the event will take place in two parts. The latter is the belief of the Tribulation Force.

According to the Tribulation Force, Rapture will begin with Jesus calling home His people. This occurs fairly early on in the book and is the impetus of converting several main characters. After the Rapture will come a seven year period called the Tribulation, during which the Antichrist will rise. At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will make his





second coming and call forth all of the saints so that they may experience eternity in Heaven.

## **Israel**

Israel is considered to be the center of the religious world by many. The country changes dramatically after being turned into an agricultural nation. Israel is also the site of many religious confrontations.

## **New Hope Village Church**

New Hope Village Church is the church where Bruce Barnes works as visitation pastor. It is the church where Barnes and Steele are saved.

## **Chicago**

Chicago is the main location in the story, home to the main characters as well as the Tribulation Force.

## **New York**

New York is the home to the United Nations.

## **London**

London is on Steele's usual flight roster and is where Steele is going when the Rapture occurs.

## **Pan-Continental Airlines**

Pan-Continental Airlines is the company that employs Rayford Steele as a pilot.

## **Global Weekly**

Global Weekly is the newspaper where Cameron "Buck" Williams and Steve Plank work.

## United Nations

The United Nations is a global organization that falls into the hands of Nicolae Carpathia. Carpathia reorganizes the powerful agency to become the Global Community.



# Themes

## Rapture

The Rapture is one of the main themes in the story. The Rapture, considered to be a futuristic event in Christianity, has a profound affect on the characters in the story. As predicted in Revelation, the Rapture is said to be when Jesus Christ will return to the earth amid great fanfare and triumph to "call home" his people—Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. According to Revelation 1:7 in the New Testament, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (King James Version)

In the story, the Rapture occurs when Steele and Williams are on a flight bound for Heathrow Airport in London. Upon returning home, Steele finds that Irene and Raymie have ascended from the earth to go to Heaven with Jesus.

There are different beliefs regarding the Rapture. While some believe that the second coming will be one event during which Jesus will descend to the earth among angels and the glory of Heaven, other believe that the event will take place in two parts. The latter is the belief of the Tribulation Force.

According to the Tribulation Force, Rapture will begin with Jesus calling home His people. This occurs fairly early on in the book and is the impetus of converting several main characters. After the Rapture will come a seven year period called the Tribulation, during which the Antichrist will rise. At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will make the second coming and call forth all of the saints so that they may experience eternity in Heaven.

## Faith

Faith is a main theme in "Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. The book is based upon the beginning of the Tribulation, the period in which the world begins its path toward the second coming of Jesus as well as the rising of the Antichrist.

Early on in the book, Rayford Steele and his wife, Irene, are at odds about faith. Although Steele was raised to go to church and try to live a good life, the man has never truly accepted Jesus as his savior. After Steele is involved a near fatal accident, Irene turns to religion and becomes a zealot. Irene pressures Steele to change and it almost ruins their marriage.

A big turning point for Steele is the Rapture. After the event, which occurs while Steele is in flight, Steele realizes that his family is gone, proving that Irene's beliefs about being "called home" by Jesus were true. Steele seeks refuge with Bruce Barnes, a visitation



pastor at the New Hope Village Church in Chicago. Even though Barnes is a pastor, his faith is not strong and in fact, the pastor has never truly accepted Jesus as his personal savior.

Barnes, along with Steele, is deeply affected by the Rapture and its aftermath. Steele goes to Barnes after he finds Irene and Raymie are gone. Barnes plays a recorded message from the senior pastor regarding the Rapture and its importance. Together, the doubting men become saved and experience a new level of faith never witnessed before.

## **Antichrist**

The references to evil can be seen in many places throughout "Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Mainly, evil refers to the actions of those who are against Christ, such as Carpathia, the Antichrist.

The concept of the Antichrist may be somewhat confusing in that some believe it is a person, others believe it is a group of people or a movement, still others see it as a set of principles to deny the existence of Jesus. The book is written in such a way that all of those beliefs could be held true. The Antichrist, the purest form of evil on the earth, is seen in Nicolae Carpathia, the Supreme Potentate of the United Nations, now the Global Community. Carpathia embodies the essence of the Antichrist in that he is willing to commit any act in order for the world to denounce Jesus and to follow in his path of a new religion. The authors employ many characteristics attributed to the Antichrist, such as a convincing and charismatic personality, one that mesmerizes people worldwide.

As a group, Carpathia's people and their principles can also represent the Antichrist. The authors create an inner circle around Carpathia that carries out his wishes and can also be seen as being a part of the core of evil.

# Style

## Point of View

"Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins is a work of fiction written in the third person omniscient point of view. The third person omniscient is appropriate for this book because it is able to reveal a wide variety of happenings and to allow the reader to witness all of the action in the story. This is a typical point of view for a fiction work, rather than using a first person point of view. A first person point of view tends to delve deeper into the emotions of the narrator or main character but often leaves much unseen.

In "Left Behind" there is a great deal going on worldwide. Through the third person omniscient point of view, the reader can, in essence, be everywhere at once.

The objectivity afforded through this point of view is also beneficial considering the book's controversial religious material. The authors have written the book so that the reader can see the viewpoints of the believers as well as the non-believers; the Christians as well as the Tribulation Saints.

This is especially helpful in regards to the numerous biblical prophecies mentioned throughout the book. If the point of view was more subjective, the reader would surely be confused by the interpretations and beliefs of the characters.

## Setting

The settings used in "Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins vary according to which character and/or group is being referenced. The main settings used are Chicago, Israel, New York.

The Tribulation Force is formed on the outskirts of Chicago and the group will maintain its headquarters in that city. Many main characters come from the Chicago area including Rayford Steele, Chloe Steele, Bruce Barnes, Hattie Durham, Cameron "Buck" Williams, and Steve Plank. Chicago is also the location of the New Hope Village Church, where Bruce Barnes serves as an assistant pastor.

New York is home to the United Nations, recently renamed the Global Community under the direction of the new Supreme Potentate, Nicolae Carpathia.

Israel is an extremely important part of the story in several ways. Israel is representative of Judaism and Christianity and thus becomes a target for Carpathia who wants to establish a new world order with one religion. There are many references to Jesus' covenant with Israel following the Rapture. One of the main characters is also from Israel. Chaim Rosenzweig, noted scientist, has literally changed the face of Israel by



developing the Eden project. The Eden project allows the ground, including the sand, in Israel to become fertile and therefore allows Israel to excel as an agricultural state.

## Language and Meaning

"Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins is set mainly in Chicago, Illinois, a major metropolitan area in the Midwestern United States. The Midwest is known as being more or less neutral in its speech and regionalisms, which allows the reader to understand the characters without having to muddle through terms and speech patterns that may differ wildly from the rest of the country.

Much of the book regards the prophecies as they are written in the Bible. The authors are careful to relay the prophecies and their supposed meanings without a great deal of theological vernacular. This is helpful when the characters refer to various teachings, including those of Tsion Ben-Judah, a rabbinical scholar who has become a Christian.

There are few terms that require an explanation to those not familiar with literature about the end of the world. Those include the Rapture, which is often considered the beginning of the end, the signifier that Jesus is preparing to return to earth to collect His people. Another term used is "Tribulation Saints," a moniker given to those who are not Christians before the Rapture but have come to believe. Additionally, the Antichrist is also used to refer mainly to a single person, which is not always the case.

In regards to specific professions, such as science, publishing and airline operations, the authors are careful to use enough jargon to be convincing without being overly showy or verbose.

## Structure

"Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days" by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins is a work of fiction. The book is the first in the "Left Behind" series, detailing the end of the world from a religious and political perspective.

The book is comprised of 468 pages, broken into 25 chapters. The shortest chapter is 16 pages in length; the longest chapter is 22 pages in length. The average length of the chapters is 19 pages.

The structure of the book is largely chronological. Most references to background material or flashbacks are set within a modern time frame, usually through the thoughts or speech of one or more of the characters.

The authors use a great deal of historical reference to support the religious context of the book. Dr. Tim LaHaye, the scholar that conceived the series, is a prophecy expert as well as being a minister and academic. LaHaye's background ensures that the references are accurate and yet there are allowances for interpretation.

Since the book is the first in a series, the Tribulation Force is set into motion but does not complete their mission. The Tribulation period will last seven years, leaving room for sequels.



## Quotes

"Rayford Steele's mind was on a woman he had never touched." (1)

"With warning sirens screaming and radio and television sending the doomed for what flimsy cover they might find, Israel defended herself for what surely would be the last time in history." (11)

"Rayford wanted more than anything to sit and talk with someone about what to make of this. But everybody he saw—friend, acquaintance, or stranger—was busy trying to make arrangements." (45)

"I know all anybody cares about is the disappearances. But we need to keep an eye on the rest of the world." (Buck, 57)

"Rayford Steele had no idea how it would feel to find evidence that his own wife and son had vanished from the face of the earth." (73)

"So, you don't buy kidnapping space aliens, but you connect the disappearances with UFOs?" (Buck to Mr. Ritz, 118)

"The Jewish Nationalists are discussing an issue I've been following for years. Who would have believed they would consider warming to one world government?" (Reporter Juan Ortiz, 151)

"What's more far-fetched than people disappearing right out of their clothes? Who else could have done that?" (Rayford Steele, 164)

"As Buck hung up, the door of the pub was blown into the room in a blinding flash and deafening crash that sent patrons screaming to the floor." (184)

"I see now, of course, that God is a sin-forgiving God, because we're human and we need that." (Bruce Barnes, 127)

"Although he was scared of what the pastor had predicted on the tape about all the bad things that would happen in the world now that the church had been raptured, he was also excited about his new faith." (218)

"After this, Buck knew Nicolae Carpathia would be embraced by all of America. And then the world." (247)

"In a way he felt he deserved this pain, although he knew better." (299)





"God tried to warn his people by putting his Word in written form centuries before. For all Rayford's education and intelligence, he felt he had been a fool." (312)

"He was full of passion and persuasion, and felt his prayers for courage and coherence answered as he spoke." (376)

## Topics for Discussion

How might the story have changed if Rayford Steele had gone ahead with the affair with Hattie Durham? How might Irene have reacted if she found out about Rayford's roving eye? Do you think Irene knew?

How do you think the Jewish community reacted when Tsion Ben-Judah announced his conversion to Christianity? What consequences did the conversion have within the Christian community? How was Carpathia affected?

Do you think that Rayford Steele would have accepted Jesus as his personal savior if the Rapture had not occurred? Would Steele have converted if Irene and Raymie were two of the many left behind?

How is it possible that Nicolae Carpathia is able to fool so many people into believing his plans for a global community? How might the others in the UN have reacted? What actions could be taken to have Carpathia removed from office as the Supreme Potentate?

Chaim Rosenzweig created a revolutionary fertilization and irrigation method known as the Eden project. Do you think such a project is possible? If so, who might create it? How would it change the global dynamic? Do you think Rosenzweig is really in danger because of the success of the project?

Buck eventually leaves Global Weekly and begins to publish the webzine, "The Truth." Compare and contrast the two mediums and their potential success rates. Why was it important for Buck to write "The Truth?" Who are Buck's readers?

What are your opinions on the Rapture? Do you believe that it will occur? Explain. If so, how do you think it will happen? Do you feel that the beliefs of the Tribulation Force are correct? Explain.

What are your views on the Antichrist? Do you believe the Antichrist exists? If so, do you believe that the Antichrist is a person, a group, or a set of principles? Explain.