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12

GLORIOUS APPEARING

THE END OF DAYS

TIM LAHAYE
JERRY B. JENKINS

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Glorious Appearing: The End of Days

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Left Behind series designed by Erik M. Peterson

Published in association with the literary agency of Alive Communications, Inc.,
7680 Goddard Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80920.
www.alivecommunications.com.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

LaHaye, Tim F.

Glorious appearing : the end of days / Tim LaHaye, Jerry B. Jenkins.

p. cm. — (Left behind)

ISBN 978-0-8423-3235-4 (hc)

ISBN 978-0-8423-3237-8 (sc)

1. Steele, Rayford (Fictitious character)—Fiction. 2. Tribulation (Christian eschatology)—Fiction. 3. Rapture (Christian eschatology)—Fiction. 4. End of the world—Fiction. 5. Second coming—Fiction. I. Jenkins, Jerry B. II. Title.

PS3562.A315G58 2004

813'.54—dc22

2003027369

Repackage first published in 2011 under ISBN 978-1-4143-3501-8.

Printed in the United States of America

17 16 15 14 13 12 11
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*To the memories of Frank LaHaye and
Harry Jenkins, whom we shall again see*

*Special thanks to David Allen for expert technical consultation
and to John Perrodin for additional biblical research*

SEVEN YEARS INTO THE TRIBULATION;
THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS
INTO THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The Believers

Enoch Dumas, early thirties; Spanish-American;
shepherd of thirty members of The Place ministry
in Chicago; relocated underground in Palos Hills,
Illinois

Montgomery Cleburn (“Mac”) McCullum, early
sixties; former pilot for Global Community
Supreme Potentate Nicolae Carpathia; presumed
dead in plane crash; chief Tribulation Force pilot on
assignment at Petra

Hannah Palemoon, mid-thirties; former GC nurse;
faked death in plane crash; on Trib Force assignment
at Petra; on staff of the International Commodity
Co-op, an underground network of believers

Razor, early twenties; Mexican; military aide to George
Sebastian; Petra

Leah Rose, early forties; former head nurse, Arthur
Young Memorial Hospital, Palatine, Illinois; on Trib
Force assignment at Petra; on staff of the Co-op

Dr. Chaim Rosenzweig (aka “Micah”), mid-seventies;
Nobel Prize–winning Israeli botanist and statesman;
former *Global Weekly* Newsmaker of the Year;
murderer of Carpathia; leader of the million-plus
Jewish remnant at Petra

George Sebastian, late twenties; former San Diego–
based U.S. Air Force combat helicopter pilot;
underground with Trib Force and Co-op;
defending Petra

Priscilla Sebastian, thirty; wife of George Sebastian;
mother of Beth Ann; Petra

Abdullah Smith, mid-thirties; former Jordanian fighter
pilot; former first officer, Phoenix 216; faked death

in plane crash; a principal Trib Force pilot on assignment at Petra

Rayford Steele, late forties; former 747 captain for Pan-Continental; lost wife and son in the Rapture; lost second wife in plane crash; former pilot for Global Community Potentate Nicolae Carpathia; original member of the Trib Force; international fugitive last seen on the Petra perimeter

Eleazar Tiberius, early fifties; an elder at Petra; father of Naomi

Naomi Tiberius, twenty; daughter of Eleazar; computer whiz; in love with Chang Wong; Petra

Otto Weser, fifty; head of small band of German believers who fled New Babylon; Petra

Lionel Whalum, late forties; former businessman; former Co-op pilot; on Trib Force assignment at Petra as new director of the Co-op

Cameron (“Buck”) Williams, mid-thirties; former senior writer for *Global Weekly*; former publisher of *Global Community Weekly* for Carpathia; original member of the Trib Force; editor of cybermagazine

The Truth; lost wife, Chloe, to Global Community guillotine; last seen defending the Old City in Jerusalem

Chang Wong, twenty-one; former Trib Force mole at Global Community Headquarters, New Babylon; on Trib Force assignment at Petra as head of computer facility; in love with Naomi Tiberius

Ming Toy Woo, mid-twenties; Chang Wong's sister; former widow, remarried to Ree Woo; former guard at the Belgium Facility for Female Rehabilitation (Buffer); AWOL, on Trib Force assignment at Petra, assisting with Co-op

Ree Woo, mid-twenties; husband of Ming Toy Woo; a principal pilot on Trib Force assignment at Petra

Gustaf Zuckerman Jr. (aka "Zeke" or "Z"), late twenties; document and appearance forger; lost father to guillotine; on Trib Force assignment at Petra

The Recently Martyred

Al B. (aka "Albie"), early fifties; native of Al Basrah, north of Kuwait; pilot; former international black

marketer; member of Trib Force; murdered in Al Basrah

Tsion Ben-Judah, early fifties; former rabbinical scholar and Israeli statesman; revealed belief in Jesus as Messiah on international TV—wife and two teenagers subsequently murdered; escaped to U.S.; former spiritual leader and teacher of Trib Force; had cyberaudience of more than a billion daily; taught the Jewish remnant at Petra; slain defending the Old City in Jerusalem

Chloe Steele Williams, mid-twenties; former student, Stanford University; lost mother and brother in the Rapture; daughter of Rayford; wife of Buck; mother of four-and-a-half-year-old Kenny Bruce; original Trib Force member; former CEO of the Co-op; guillotined by the GC at the former Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois

T h e E n e m i e s

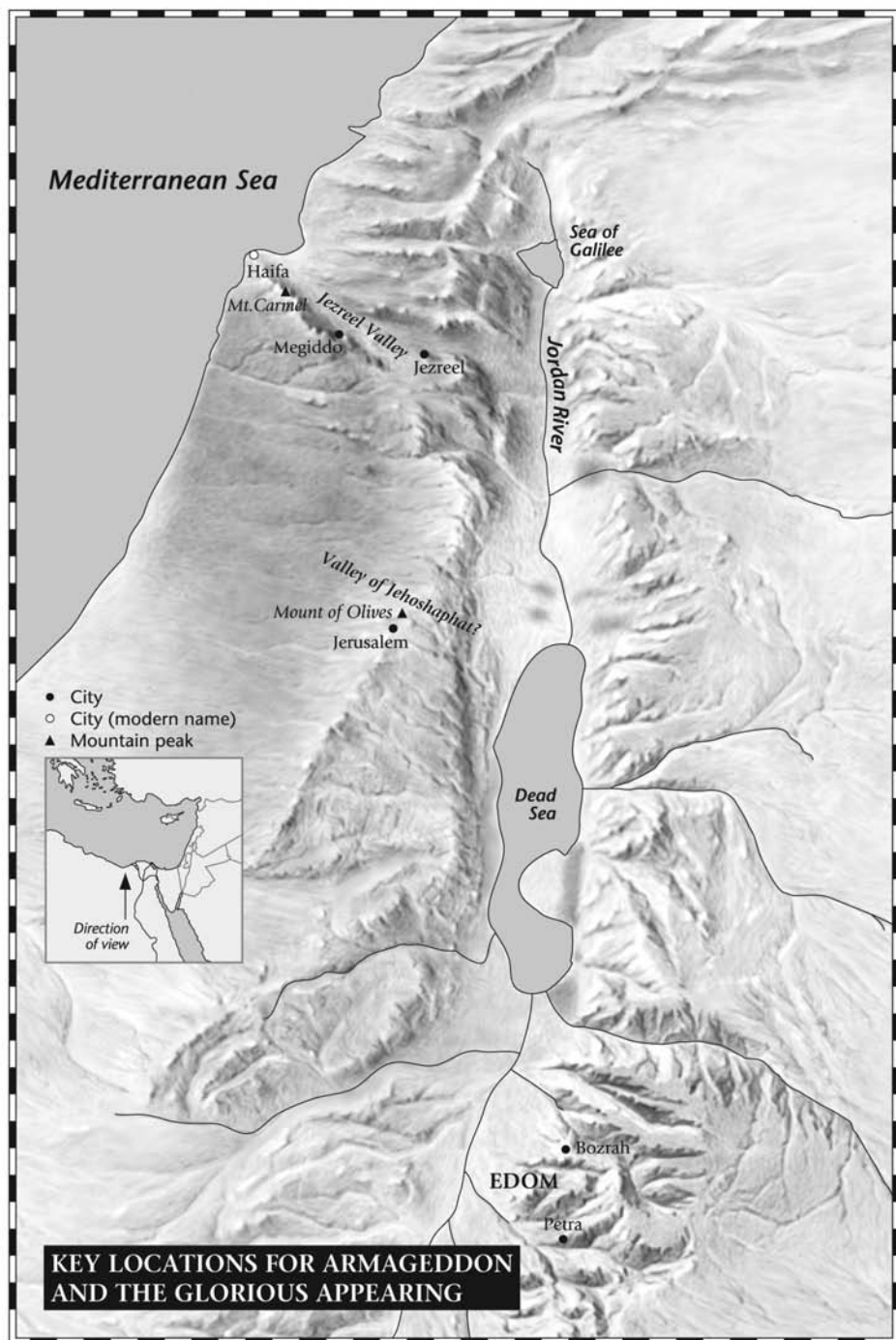
Nicolae Jetty Carpathia, late thirties; former president of Romania; former secretary-general, United Nations; self-appointed Global Community potentate; assassinated in Jerusalem; resurrected at GC Palace complex, New Babylon; leading massive

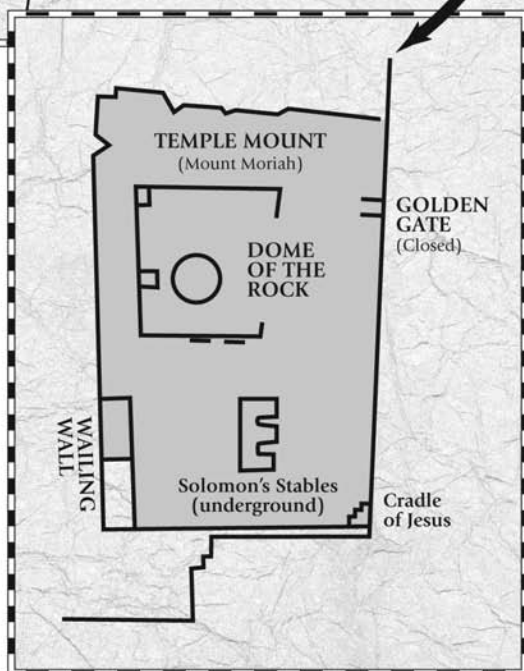
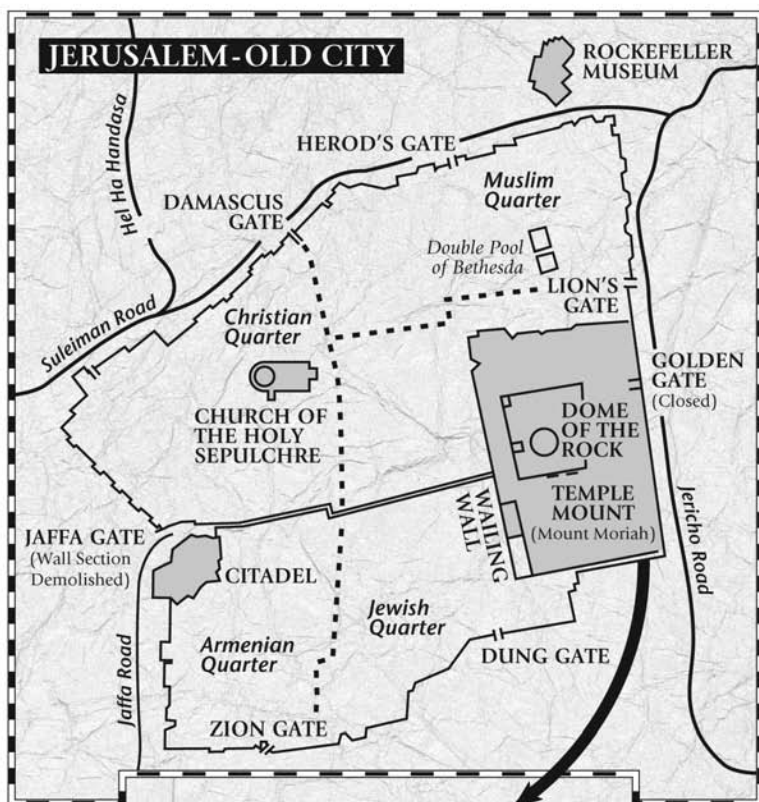
Unity Army forces in the Valley of Megiddo; last seen outside Herod's Gate on the Suleiman Road in Jerusalem

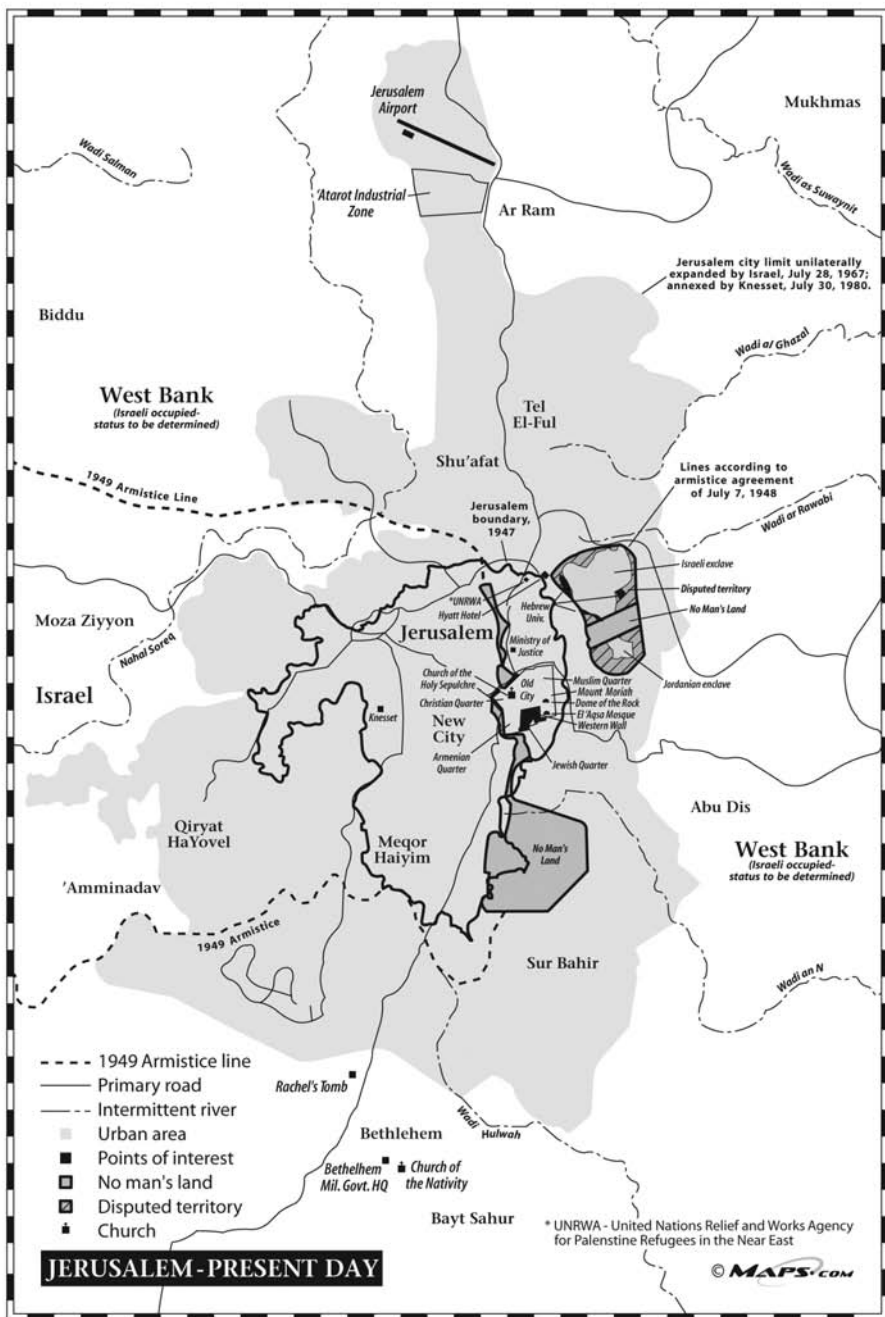
Leon Fortunato, late fifties; former supreme commander and Carpathia's right hand; now Most High Reverend Father of Carpathianism, proclaiming the potentate as the risen god; One World Unity Army command post, Megiddo

Viv Ivins, early seventies; lifelong friend of Carpathia; GC operative; Unity Army command post, Megiddo

Suhail Akbar, mid-forties; Carpathia's chief of Security and Intelligence; Unity Army command post, Megiddo







PROLOGUE

From Armageddon

RAYFORD STARTED DOWN the back side of Petra, finding it even more harrowing than coming up. He had stayed with Chang and Naomi a little longer than he had planned, so he assumed Mac would be looking for him and that George thought he had already arrived.

From his vantage point he had a good view of the army a mile off. He was reaching for his phone to reassure Mac when it became clear something had happened. The front lines were recoiling again, so George must have initiated another burst of the directed energy weapons.

This time, however, despite the ensuing chaos, the Unity Army didn't take it sitting down. Rayford heard the booms

of retaliatory fire, like thunder from a storm head a hundred miles wide. He knew enough about munitions to know that Carpathia's forces were a little far away to be using the mortar cannons and shooting at high angles. He guessed the shells would drop short of the Petra perimeter.

He was wrong. Maybe their cannons were bigger than the typical unrifled short barrels. The shells flew past the perimeter and began dropping all around him. When one exploded right in front of him, Rayford was nearly pitched off the ATV. Grabbing for the handlebar with his free hand, he saw his phone go flying, bouncing a hundred yards down the rocky steep.

And now his vehicle was out of control. He bounced high off the seat and realized he was soaring through the air with only his hands attached to the ATV. He came down hard, and the contraption bounced and rolled sideways. To hang on or not was the only thing on his mind, and quickly that option was gone too. The four-wheeler hit yet again, ripping his grip away. As he bounced and rolled, he kept picking up the sight of the vehicle disintegrating as it smashed into rocks all the way into a valley.

Rayford reminded himself not to try to break his own fall. He tucked hands and arms in and tried to relax, fighting his natural instinct for all he was worth. The grade was too steep and his speed too fast to control himself. The best he could wish for was a soft landing place.

A shell deafened him from about ten feet to his right, knocking him into a sideways roll. Rayford felt his temple smash into

a sharp rock and was aware of what sounded like rushing water as he rolled toward thorny overgrowth. Scary as the thorns looked, they had to be softer than what he had been hitting.

Rayford was able to shift his body weight as he slowed and backed into the thorns. It was then he realized what the liquid sound was. With each beat of his heart, galloping now, his life's blood spurted six feet from the wound in his temple.

He pressed his palm hard against his head and felt the gush against his hand. He pressed with all his might and felt he might be containing it somewhat. But Rayford was in danger now—mortal danger. No one knew exactly where he was. He was without communications or transportation. He didn't even want to inventory his injuries, because regardless, they were minor compared to the hole in his head. He had to get help—and fast—or he would be dead in minutes.

Rayford's arms were gashed, and he felt sharp pains in both knees and one ankle. He reached with his free hand to pull up his pant leg and wished he hadn't. Not only had something sliced the flesh from his ankle, but something had taken part of the bone too.

Could he walk? Dare he try? He was too far from anywhere to crawl. He waited for his pulse to abate and for his equilibrium to return. He had to be a mile from Mac and his people, and he could not see them. There was no going back up. He rolled up onto his feet, squatting, one hand desperately trying to keep himself from bleeding to death.

Rayford tried to stand. Only one leg worked, and it was the one with the nearly totaled ankle. He may have broken a

shinbone in the other. He tried to hop, but the incline was so great, he found himself pitching forward again. And now he was out of control one more time, trying to hop to keep from falling but picking up speed with every bounce. Whatever he did, he could not take his hand from his temple, and he dared not land on one more hard thing. "Lord, now would be a most appropriate time for You to come."



Chang sensed something was about to give. He had succeeded in intercepting signals from geosynchronous satellites that supported communications among the millions of troops. They were about to move, and his key people needed to know.

He called George. "Expect an advance within sixty seconds," he said.

"We've already been shelled," George yelled. "You mean more than that?"

"Yes, they will be coming."

"Rayford see you?"

"Left a little while ago. On his way to see Mac."

"Thanks. Call Mac, would you? I'll inform the others."

Chang called and told Mac the same.

"Hey," Mac said, "I can't raise Sebastian, and Ray is overdue."

"On his way," Chang said.

He called Buck. "Expect ad—"

But he was cut off. He redialed. Nothing.



“They’re coming! They’re coming!”

Buck heard a young rebel shrieking just as his phone chirped, and he saw an incendiary device hurled over the Rockefeller Museum, right at his position. He saw Unity Army troop movement from every side, and he grabbed his phone and held it up to his ear just as the bomb hit the wall right in front of him and clattered to the ground outside.

He recognized Chang’s voice just before the bomb blew a hole in the wall. Rock and shrapnel slammed his whole right side, killed his phone, and made him drop one Uzi. He felt something give way in his hip and his neck as his perch disintegrated.

One of the young boys near him had been blown into the air and cartwheeled to the pavement. Buck was determined to ride the wall as it fell. He reached for his neck and felt a torrent of blood. He was no medical student, but he could tell something had sliced his carotid artery—no small problem.

As the wall crumbled, he danced and high-stepped to stay upright, but he had to keep a hand on his neck. The remaining Uzi slid down into his left hand, but when he stabbed it into something to keep his balance, it fell away. He was unarmed, falling, and mortally wounded.

And the enemy was coming.



Rayford could break his fall only with his free hand, not daring to take pressure off his temple. His chin took as much of

the brunt as the heel of his hand as he slid at what he guessed was a forty-five-degree angle. There would be no walking. All he could do was crawl now and try to stay alive.



Buck's feet caught in a crevasse of shifting rock, and his upper body flopped forward. He was hanging upside down from the crumbling wall over the Old City. His hip was torn and bleeding too, and blood rushed to his head.



Even inside the tech center of a city made of rock, Chang felt the vibration of the millions of soldiers advancing on Petra. He was clicking here and there, flipping switches, and trying to make calls. How far would God let this go before sending the conquering King?



Fighting unconsciousness, he tried gingerly edging along, one hand ahead of him, the other occupied. Each inch made the angle seem steeper, the way more unstable. With every beat of his heart, every rush of blood, every stab of pain, he wondered what was the use. How important was it to stay alive? For what? For whom? "Come, Lord Jesus."

Dizziness overwhelmed, pain stabbed. A lung had to be punctured. His breath came in wheezes, agonizing, piercing. The first hint of the end was the crazy rhythm of his heart. Racing, then skipping, then fluttering. Too much blood loss.

Not enough to the brain. Not enough oxygen. Drowsiness overtook panic. Unconsciousness would be such a relief.

And so he allowed it. The lung was ready to burst. The heart fluttered and stopped. The pulsing blood became a pool.

He saw nothing through wide-open eyes. "Lord, please." He heard the approach of the enemy. He felt it. But soon he felt nothing. With no blood pumping, no air moving, he fell limp and died.



Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

MATTHEW 24:29-30

CHAPTER 1

MAC McCULLUM SCANNED the Petra perimeter with high-powered field glasses. Rayford should have reached him by now.

Mac's watch showed 1300 hours—one in the afternoon, Carpathia Time. It had to be more than a hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Sweat ran down his neck from the grayish red hair peeking out from under his cap, soaking his shirt. Mac detected not even a wisp of wind and wondered what his freckled, leathery face would look like in a few days.

Without taking his eyes from the lenses, Mac unholstered his phone and punched in the connection to Chang Wong in the computer center. "Where's Ray?"

“I was about to ask you,” Chang said. “He left here forty-five minutes ago, and no one else has seen him either.”

“What do we hear from Buck?”

Mac noticed the hesitation. “Nothing new.”

“Since when?”

“Uh, Rayford heard from him late this morning.”

“And?”

Another beat. “Nothing to speak of.”

“What’re you sayin’, Chang?”

“Nothing.”

“I gathered. What’s wrong?”

“Nothing that won’t be cured in a little—”

“I don’t need double-talk, buddy.” Mac continued surveying the rocky slopes, feeling his pulse quicken despite his years and experience. “If you won’t tell me, I’ll call him myself.”

“Buck?”

“Well, who else?”

“I’ve tried. My sensor shows his phone inoperable.”

“Turned off?”

“Unlikely, Mr. McCullum.”

“Well, I should guess so. Malfunctioning? Damaged?”

“I’m hoping the former, sir.”

“Global Positioning System active, at least?”

“No, sir.”



Chaim Rosenzweig had not slept, and after only two light meals of manna, he expected to feel the fatigue. But no. The

best he could calculate, this was the day. He felt the swelling anticipation in both his head and his chest. It was as if his mind raced as his heart ached for the greatest event in the history of the cosmos.

The old man's senior advisers, a half-dozen elders, sat with him deep in the stone compound of Petra. Eleazar Tiberius, a broad globe of a man, offered that the million-plus pilgrims under their charge "are clearly as restless as we. Is there nothing we can tell them?"

"I have an activity in mind," Chaim said. "But what would you have me say?"

"I am newer to this than you, Rabbi, but—"

"Please," Chaim said, raising a hand. "Reserve such a title for Dr. Ben-Judah. I am merely a student, thrust into this—"

"Nonetheless," Eleazar continued, "I sense the populace is as eager as I to know the exact moment of Messiah's return. I mean, if it is, as you and Dr. Ben-Judah have for so long taught, seven years from the signing of the covenant between Antichrist and Israel, does that mean it will be to the minute? I recall the signing being at around four in the afternoon, Israel time, seven years ago today."

Chaim smiled. "I have no idea. I do know this: God has His own economy of time. Do I believe Messiah will return today? Yes. Will it trouble me if He does not appear until tomorrow? No. My faith will not be shaken. But I expect Him soon."

"And this activity you mentioned?"

"Yes, something to occupy the minds of the people while we wait. I came across a disc of a dramatic sermon from before

the turn of the century by an African-American preacher, long since in heaven, of course. I propose calling the people together and showing it.”

“The Lord may come while it is playing,” an elder said.

“So much the better.”

“There remain unbelievers among us,” Eleazar said.

Chaim shook his head. “I confess that puzzles and disturbs me, but it also fulfills prophecy. There are those who enjoy the safety of Petra, even many who believe Jesus was the most influential person who ever lived, who have not yet put their faith in Him. They do not recognize Him as the long-awaited Messiah, and they have not acknowledged Him as their Savior. This sermon is also evangelistic. Perhaps many of the undecided will take their stand before Messiah appears.”

“Better than waiting until the event itself,” someone said.

“Gather the people for a two-o’clock showing,” Chaim said, rising. “And let’s close in prayer.”

“Begging your pardon,” Eleazar said, “but do you feel the absence of Dr. Ben-Judah as keenly as I do?”

“More than you know, Eleazar. Let’s pray for him right now, and I will call him in a few minutes. I would love to share his greeting with the people and hear what has been happening in Jerusalem.”



Mac’s magnified vision fell upon colorful, metallic pieces glinting in the sun, perhaps a mile from his position. *Oh no.*

A red fuel tank and a tire looked very much like parts

from Rayford's all-terrain vehicle. Mac tried to steady his hands as he panned in a wide arc, looking for signs of his friend. It appeared the ATV could have been hit by a heat-seeking missile or smashed to bits by tumbling. Perhaps, he thought, no sign of Rayford nearby was good news.

Mac raised Chang again. "Sorry to be a nuisance," he said, "but what does your sensor say about Ray's phone?"

"I was afraid you'd ask. It's inoperable too, but its GPS is still pulsing. My screen shows it deep in a narrow crevasse a little over forty-five hundred feet below you."

"I'm heading down there."

"Wait, Mr. McCullum."

"What?"

"I've got a lens pointed that way, and there's no room in the opening for a person."

"You can see the phone?"

"No, but I know it's there. It can be the only thing there. The opening is too narrow for anything else."

"So have you seen his ATV too?"

"I'm looking."

"Well, I have. If that phone is due south of me, look about twenty degrees east."

"Hang on . . . I see it."

"But no sign of Ray, Chang. I'm going to look."

"Sir? Could you send someone else?"

"Why? I'm twiddling my thumbs here. Big Dog One has the troops under control."

"Frankly, I'd rather you go to Jerusalem."

“You gonna tell me what’s goin’ on?”

“Come see me, Mr. McCullum. I was honoring the confidence of Captain Steele, but I think you—and Dr. Rosenzweig—should know.”

Mac arrived at the tech center, deep in the bowels of Petra, a few minutes after one thirty in the afternoon. Chaim rose to meet him while Chang acknowledged him with a look but kept turning back to his numerous screens. Finally Chang pulled away and the three sat, far from the ears of others. Mac noticed, however, that many techies and others frequently stole glances in their direction.

“There’s no delicate way to say this,” Chang began. “Captain Steele told Naomi and me this morning that Mr. Williams had told him that Dr. Ben-Judah was killed in the fighting at Jerusalem.”

Mac stiffened.

Chaim buried his face in his hands. “I hope he did not suffer terribly,” the old man said.

“With Captain Steele missing now and—”

“What? Him too?” Chaim said. “And I am unable to raise Cameron on the phone. . . .”

“I felt you both should know. I mean, I know this may all be moot by this time tomorrow.”

“Perhaps even by four this afternoon,” Chaim said. “The question now is what to say, what to do.”

“Nothin’ we *can* do,” Mac said. “I’ve got Abdullah Smith looking for Ray. Chang here thinks I ought to go to Jerusalem.”

Chaim looked up in apparent surprise.

"I do," Chang said. "From the looks of what's left of his vehicle and his phone, odds are all Mr. Smith is going to find are Captain Steele's remains. I'm sorry to be so blunt."

"But a flight to Jerusalem now?" Chaim said. "Just to see whether Cameron—"

"It's what I would want if it was me," Mac said. "I know he may be dead, and either way, Jesus is comin', but with Tsion gone, I'd just as soon get Buck outta there and back here with us."

"Even for as little as an hour," Chaim said, more a statement than a question.

"Like I say, that's what I'd want."

"And what do we tell the people?" Chaim said.

Minutes later, Mac was in Gus Zuckerman's quarters. He filled in the young man on his plans. "And here's the hard part, Z. I want to leave in ten minutes."

"Can you give me twenty?"

"Fifteen."

"Deal."

"What've you got, Z?" Mac said, as the forger yanked open a file drawer, riffled through several folders, and slapped one open on his desk.

"Your new identity," Zeke said, moving to a closet, which he opened with a flourish. There were two dozen black-on-black Global Community Unity Army uniforms, from tinted eye-shield helmets to calf-length boots. "Find one that fits while I'm working on your documents. Don't forget the gloves. Nobody's checking for marks of loyalty anymore anyway, but just to be safe."

“How do you do this, Z?” Mac said, approaching garments that looked his size.

“With lots of help. Sebastian’s boys have killed a few of ’em, and I got me a little crew that runs out and gathers up their stuff—papers, clothes, and all.”

“Weapons?”

“Course.”

When Mac emerged with the uniform a perfect fit, he found Zeke mixing some sort of a brew.

“You look good, Mac,” he said. “Problem is, you got to be black.”

“And you can manage that in a few minutes?”

“If you’re game.”

“Whatever it takes.”

Mac whipped off his helmet, jacket, shirt, and gloves. Zeke used the mix to paint him dark brown from the shoulders to the hairline. “Keep the helmet on, ’cause I haven’t got time to make the hair authentic.”

“Check.”

“And let’s do your hands, just in case.” Zeke dyed Mac’s skin from midforearm to fingertips. “This should dry in two and a half minutes. Then an instant photo, and you’re on your way. Give my best to Buck and Tsion.”

Mac hesitated. “You betcha. Zeke, you’re a genius.”

The younger man snorted. “Just here to serve.”

Mac was sprinting to a chopper when he reached Abdullah Smith by phone.

“Nothing yet, Mac. I will let you know as soon as I discover anything.”

As Mac lifted off, he saw multitudes streaming from all corners of Petra and gathering at the central meeting place.



Chaim was alarmed at the mood of the throng. It was the biggest crowd he had ever drawn at Petra, and it was noisy, clearly preoccupied, antsy. He heard nervous laughter, saw lots of embracing. When one or two would look to the skies, hundreds—sometimes thousands—did likewise.

“My beloved brothers and sisters in Messiah,” he began, “as well as the seekers and undecided among us, please try to quiet yourselves and settle for a moment. Please! I know we all expect the imminent return of our Lord and Savior, and I can think of no greater privilege than to have Him appear as we speak. But—”

He was interrupted by thunderous applause and cheering.

Chaim gestured that they should be seated. “I share your enthusiasm! And while I know that there will be nothing else on your minds until He comes, I thought there might be value in focusing specifically on Him this afternoon. I know there remain among us many who are withholding their decisions about Him until He appears. Consider this my last effort to persuade you not to wait. We do not know what may befall us at that moment, whether God will allow scoffers and mockers and rejecters to change their minds. Pray He will not harden your heart due to your rebellion or unbelief.

Surely there has been more than enough evidence than anyone could need to reveal the truth of God's plan.

"While we watch and wait, consider the thoughts of a great preacher from decades past. His name was Dr. Shadrach Meshach Lockridge, and his message is entitled 'My King Is . . .'"

Chaim signaled for the disc to play, and it was projected off two white walls of smooth stone, each several stories high, where all could see it. The sound system carried it to the ends of the seated masses.

Lockridge proved to be animated and thunderous, interrupting his own cadence of shouts and growls with whispers and huge smiles. The disc caught him near the end of his sermon, and he was picking up steam.

"The Bible says my king is a seven-way king. He's the king of the Jews; that's a racial king. He's the king of Israel; that's a national king. He's the king of righteousness. He's the king of the ages. He's the king of heaven. He's the king of glory. He's the king of kings. Besides being a seven-way king, He's the Lord of lords. That's my king. Well, I wonder, do you know Him?"

Hundreds of thousands applauded, and many stood, only to sit again as Lockridge continued.

"David said, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.' My king is a sovereign king. No means of measure can define His limitless love. No far-seeing telescope can bring into visibility the coastline of His shoreless supply. No barrier can hinder Him from pouring out His blessings.

“He’s enduringly strong. He’s entirely sincere. He’s eternally steadfast. He’s immortally graceful. He’s infinitely powerful. He’s impartially merciful. Do you know Him?”

Many shouted their agreement.

“He’s the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed the horizon of this world. He’s God’s Son. He’s the sinner’s Savior. He’s the centerpiece of civilization. He stands in the solitude of Himself. He’s honest and He’s unique. He’s unparalleled. He’s unprecedented.

“He is the loftiest idea in literature. He’s the highest personality in philosophy. He is the supreme problem in higher criticism. He’s the fundamental doctrine of true theology. He’s the core, the necessity for spiritual religion. He’s the miracle of the ages. Yes, He is. He’s the superlative of everything good that you choose to call Him. He’s the only one qualified to be our all-sufficiency. I wonder if you know Him today.”

As the preacher continued, more and more listeners stood, some raising their hands, others shouting agreement, others nodding.

“He supplies strength for the weak. He’s available for the tempted and tried. He sympathizes and He saves. He strengthens and sustains. He guards and He guides. He heals the sick. He cleanses the leper. He forgives the sinner. He discharges debtors. He delivers the captive. He defends the feeble. He blesses the young. He serves the unfortunate. He regards the aged. He rewards the diligent. And He beautifies the meek. I wonder if you know Him.

“Well, this is my king. He’s the key to knowledge. He’s the wellspring of wisdom. He’s the doorway of deliverance. He’s the pathway of peace. He’s the roadway of righteousness. He’s the highway of holiness. He’s the gateway of glory. Do you know Him?

“Well, His office is manifold. His promise is sure. His life is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. I wish I could describe Him to you.”

That elicited an ocean of laughter and more applause. The same had happened with his original audience, and Lockridge had paused, allowing it to fade before he continued.

“He’s indescribable. He’s incomprehensible. He’s invincible. He’s irresistible. Well, you can’t get Him out of your mind. You can’t get Him off of your hand. You can’t outlive Him and you can’t live without Him. The Pharisees couldn’t stand Him, but they found they couldn’t stop Him. Pilate couldn’t find any fault in Him. Herod couldn’t kill Him. Death couldn’t handle Him, and the grave couldn’t hold Him. That’s my king!”

Everyone was standing now, hands raised, many applauding, shouting, some dancing.

“And Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever and ever and ever! How long is that? And ever and ever! And when you get through with all the for-
evers, then amen! Good God Almighty! Amen!”



By the time Mac found himself within sight of the rocky Judean hills where Jerusalem lay smoking in the early afternoon sun, he had begun to despair of finding Buck. If he was all right, would he not have borrowed a phone to check in? The latest intelligence from Chang was that Buck had reported Tsion's death to Rayford from inside the Old City.

Though the colossal armies of the world—now amalgamated into Carpathia's Global Community Unity Army—stretched by the multimillions from north of Jerusalem to Edom, it was clear from the air that the current major offensive focused on the Old City.

Mac looked for a place to land. He had to look like a GC officer on assignment and head on foot to the Old City as if he knew what he was doing. In fact, he didn't have a clue. The Old City was only a third of a mile square. And if he found Buck alive, what was he to do? Arrest him and muscle him to the chopper? Finding Buck dead or alive, Mac decided, would be like discovering a patch of dry ground in the Louisiana bayou.

Mac's phone chirped, and he saw it was Chang. "Give me some good news."

"Such as?"

"Such as Buck's dead phone all of a sudden started showin' his position."

"No such luck. But I do have something. Carpathia's on the rampage about the destruction of New Babylon, and he's taking heat from all over the world."

“Heat?”

“Everybody who depended on New Babylon is crying over the loss. I’m picking up televised reports from everywhere of leaders, diplomats, businessmen—you name it—literally weeping, decrying what’s become of New Babylon and their own interests. Some are committing suicide right on camera.”

“No way the GC is puttin’ that stuff on the air.”

“No, *they* aren’t, but yours truly still has his ways.”

“Attaboy, Chang, but how does that help me find Buck?”

“You’re not going to find Buck, Mr. McCullum.”

“What? You know that for sure?”

“I’m just stating the obvious.”

“Ye of little faith.”

“Sorry. But I figured as long as you’re there and undercover, you might want to know where Carpathia is.”

“I don’t care where he is. I’m here to find Buck.”

“All right then.”

“But just for smiles, where is he? Last I heard he was on a bullhorn outside Herod’s Gate. Moved there from his bunker near the Sea of Galilee. Unless they were just broadcasting his voice.”

“No, it was him all right. He’s moved his entire command post inside the Old City.”

“Impossible. I’m lookin’ down on it right now, and the place is crawling with—”

“I thought so too until I heard where. Underground.”

“You don’t mean—”

“Solomon’s Stables.”

“How do I get in there?”

“Follow somebody. Carpathia’s got an entire regiment there, and I got your new name on the list.”

“That might not have been prudent, Chang.”

“Why?”

“What if I choose not to go, am discovered missing, and someone sees me elsewhere?”

“Well, there *is* that possibility, yes. Tell them you’re on your way.”

“What if I’m not? I mean, I’d love to be your eyes and ears here, Chang, but my priority is Buck. And nothin’ we know about Carpathia now is going to amount to a hill of beans anyway. What’s gonna happen is gonna happen. Can you get me off that list?”

“Not without looking suspicious. Sorry, Mr. McCullum. I thought I was doing the right—”

“Don’t worry about it. None of it will matter tomorrow, will it?”

Mac saw GC activity and other choppers putting down at the Tombs of the Prophets, south of the Mount of Olives, east of the Old City. Caravans of jeeps quickly loaded the disgorged personnel and raced them toward the conflict. As soon as Mac stepped out of his copter at 2:45 p.m., an officer directing traffic pointed him to an armored personnel carrier. Mac saluted and jogged that way. He joined a dozen other like-uniformed soldiers, who merely nodded at each other, tight-lipped, and rode in stony silence.

The cavalcade headed north on Jericho Road and turned west in front of the Rockefeller Museum onto Suleiman Street.

“We headed to Herod’s Gate?” someone said.

“Is it open?” someone else said.

“Damascus Gate,” the driver announced.

As they passed Herod’s Gate, Mac joined the others in pressing against the windows on the south side of the vehicle. Somehow the resistance continued to hold the gate.

“If you’re assigned to the potentate,” the driver said, “follow me to the entrance to the stables. Everybody else head for the staging area at the Church of the Flagellation. When we have enough personnel, we’ll attack the insurgents from behind and blow ’em out Herod’s Gate.”

Mac felt himself swelling with pride over what Tsion and Buck had apparently accomplished before the rabbi was killed. If they had been at Herod’s Gate, they were responsible for helping hold that position against overwhelming odds. *And neither of them battle trained.*

Mac assumed Buck would agree that Tsion would not want his body removed from the Old City. He only hoped Buck had found an appropriate spot for the rabbi. Bodies fallen in an active battle had a way of getting trampled beyond recognition. That wouldn’t matter tomorrow either, but Mac knew he and Buck would be on the same page.

Mac found himself fighting anguish. No way Buck would let them worry and wonder for this long. Surely he could have found a way to check in if he was alive.

When the vehicle stopped and the driver gave the order,

Mac and the soldiers got out and moved as directed. Mac dropped several paces behind his group and phoned Chang, speaking quietly. "Anything?"

"Nothing."

"I'm not going to succeed, am I?"

"What do you want to hear, sir?"

"You know."

"I'm past pretending, Mr. McCullum."

"I appreciate that. Maybe I should just proceed to my assignment."

"To the compound?"

"Yeah. I know I should have my head examined, but I'd love to be with ol' Nick when Jesus gets here."



Chang felt Naomi's strong fingers on either side of his neck.

"You're tense," she said.

"Aren't you?" he said.

"Relax, love. Messiah is coming."

Chang couldn't turn from the screens. "I'd like to lose no one else before that. No matter how much I tell myself they'll be dead only a short while, it all seems so pointless now. I don't want anyone hurt, let alone suffering, then dying. Mr. McCullum's going was my idea."

"But he sure jumped on it, didn't he?"

"I knew he would. I wish I could have gone."

"You know this place can't function without your—"

"Don't start, Naomi."

“You know it’s true.”

“Regardless, I sent him for my own vicarious thrill. No way he’s going to find Buck, and if he does, Buck will be dead. Then what’s Mac supposed to do? If he gets found out, he’s history. And for what? He could be here watching for the return with everyone else.”

Naomi pulled a chair next to Chang and sat. “What do you hear from Mr. Smith?”

Chang sighed. “That’s turned out to be a waste of time and manpower too. So far he hasn’t found a thing. Either Captain Steele was obliterated by a missile or he was buried in the sand.”

“Could he have crawled to safety?”

“There’s no safety in that sun, Naomi.”

“That’s what I mean. Maybe he found shelter or built himself some shield against the heat.”

Chang shrugged. “Best-case scenario, I guess. But wouldn’t he think to leave some sign for us?”

“Maybe he was hurt too badly or simply had no resources.”

“He could arrange sticks or rocks, even a piece of clothing.”

“If he was able,” Naomi said.

Chang’s phone chirping made them both jump. “Yes, Mr. Smith?”

“I’m on his trail. He was on the move for a while, at least.”

“What did you find?”

“Blood, I’m afraid.”

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



JERRY B. JENKINS, former vice president for publishing at Moody Bible Institute of Chicago and currently chairman of the board of trustees, is the author of more than 175 books, including the best-selling *Left Behind* series. Twenty of his books have reached the *New York Times* Best Sellers List (seven in the number-one spot) and have also appeared on the *USA Today*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Wall Street Journal* best-seller lists. *Desecration*, book nine in the *Left Behind* series, was the best-selling book in the world in 2001. His books have sold nearly 70 million copies.

Also the former editor of *Moody* magazine, his writing has appeared in *Time*, *Reader's Digest*, *Parade*, *Guideposts*, *Christianity Today*, and dozens of other periodicals. He was featured on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine in 2004.

His nonfiction books include as-told-to biographies with Hank Aaron, Bill Gaither, Orel Hershiser, Luis Palau, Joe Gibbs, Walter Payton, and Nolan Ryan among many others. The Hershiser and Ryan books reached the *New York Times* Best Sellers List.

Jenkins assisted Dr. Billy Graham with his autobiography, *Just As I Am*, also a *New York Times* best seller. Jerry spent 13 months working with Dr. Graham, which he considers the privilege of a lifetime.

Jerry owns Jenkins Entertainment, a filmmaking company in Los Angeles, which produced the critically acclaimed movie *Midnight Clear*, based on his book of the same name. See www.Jenkins-Entertainment.com.

Jerry Jenkins also owns the Christian Writers Guild, which aims to train tomorrow's professional Christian writers. Under Jerry's leadership, the guild has expanded to include college-credit courses, a critique service, literary registration services, and writing contests, as well as an annual conference. See www.ChristianWritersGuild.com.

As a marriage-and-family author, Jerry has been a frequent guest on Dr. James Dobson's *Focus on the Family* radio program and is a sought-after speaker and humorist. See www.AmbassadorSpeakers.com.

Jerry has been awarded four honorary doctorates.

He and his wife, Dianna, have three grown sons and six grandchildren.

Check out Jerry's blog at <http://jerryjenkins.blogspot.com>.

DR. TIMLAHAYE (www.timlahaye.com), who conceived and created the idea of fictionalizing an account of the Rapture and the Tribulation, is a noted author, minister, and nationally recognized speaker on Bible prophecy. He is the founder of both Tim LaHaye Ministries and The PreTrib Research Center.



Dr. LaHaye speaks at many of the major Bible prophecy conferences in the U.S. and Canada, where his prophecy books are very popular.

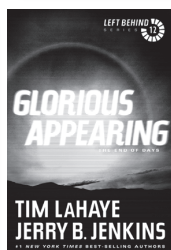
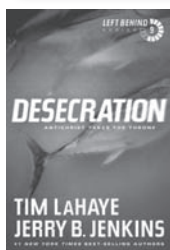
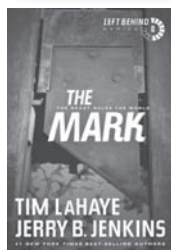
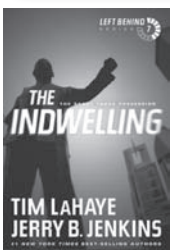
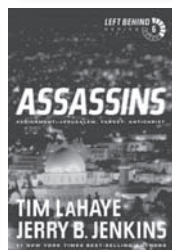
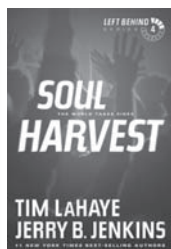
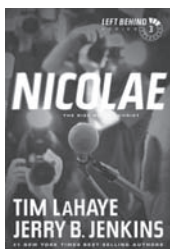
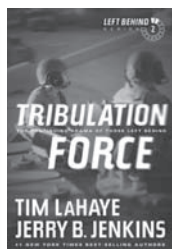
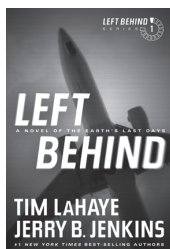
Dr. LaHaye earned a doctor of ministry degree from Western Theological Seminary and received an honorary doctor of literature degree from Liberty University. For 25 years he pastored one of the nation's outstanding churches in San Diego, which grew to three locations. During that time he founded two accredited Christian high schools, a Christian school system of ten schools, and San Diego Christian College (formerly known as Christian Heritage College).

There are over 59 million copies of Dr. LaHaye's 50 nonfiction books, some of which have been published in over 37 languages. He has written books on a wide variety of subjects, such as family life, temperaments, and Bible prophecy. His fiction works include the Left Behind series

and the Jesus Chronicles, written with Jerry B. Jenkins. LaHaye's other fiction series of prophetic novels consist of the Babylon Rising series and The End series. Dr. LaHaye is the father of four grown children, grandfather of nine, and great-grandfather of eleven.

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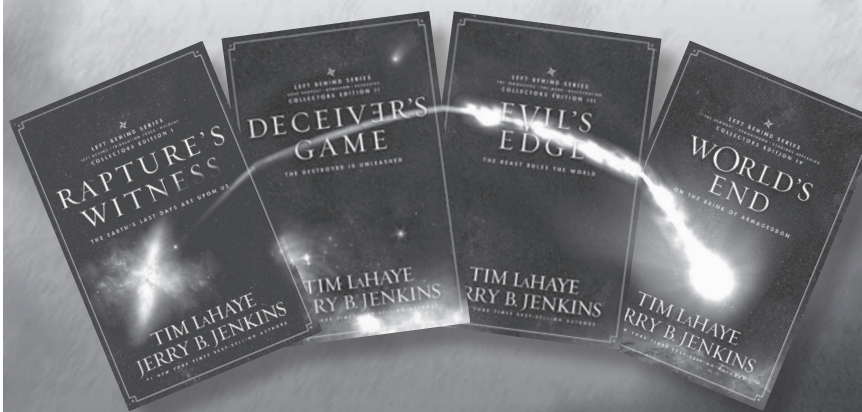
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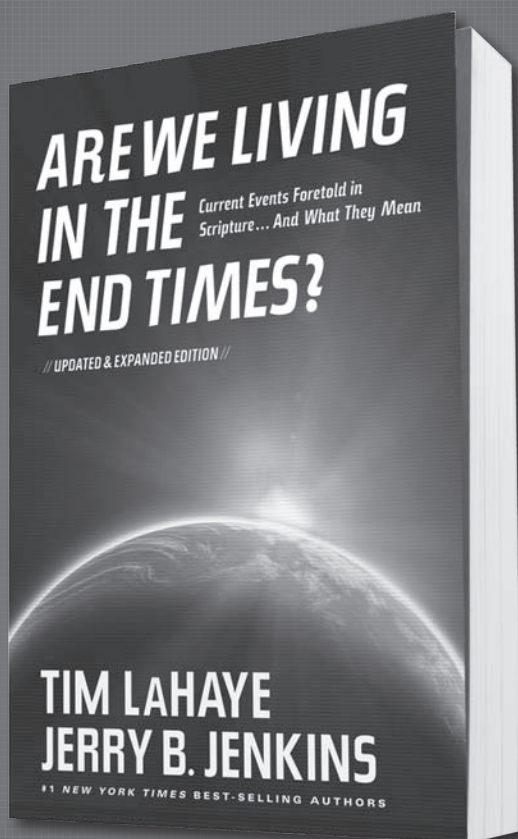
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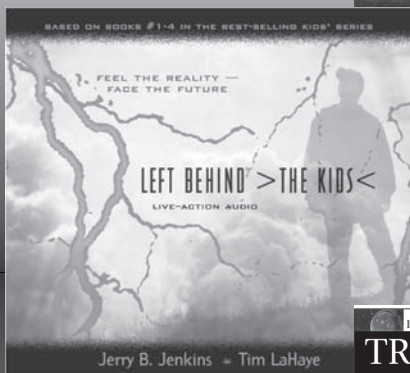
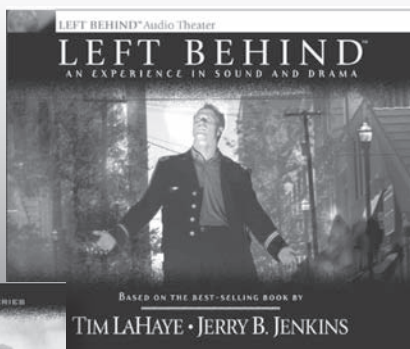
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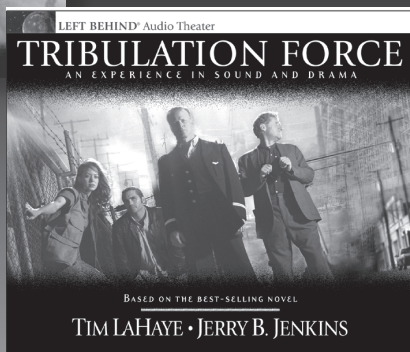
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