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# TIM LAHAYE JERRY B. JENKINS



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*To Murf, Timmy Mac, and Mary,  
with gratitude.*

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for expert technical consultation.*



FORTY-TWO MONTHS INTO THE TRIBULATION;  
TWENTY-FIVE DAYS INTO THE GREAT  
TRIBULATION

*The Believers*

**Rayford Steele**, midforties; former 747 captain for Pan-Continental; lost wife and son in the Rapture; former pilot for Global Community Potentate Nicolae Carpathia; original member of the Tribulation Force; international fugitive; on assignment at Mizpe Ramon in the Negev Desert, center for Operation Eagle

**Cameron (“Buck”) Williams**, early 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*; fugitive; incognito at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem

**Chloe Steele Williams**, early twenties; former student, Stanford University; lost mother and brother in the Rapture; daughter of Rayford; wife of Buck; mother of fifteen-month-old Kenny Bruce; CEO of International Commodity Co-op, an underground network of believers; original Trib Force member; fugitive in exile, Strong Building, Chicago

**Tsion Ben-Judah**, late forties; former rabbinical scholar and Israeli statesman; revealed belief in Jesus as the Messiah on international TV—wife and two teenagers subsequently murdered; escaped to U.S.; spiritual leader and teacher of the Trib Force; cyberaudience of more than a billion daily; fugitive in exile, Strong Building, Chicago

**Dr. Chaim Rosenzweig**, late sixties; Nobel Prize-winning Israeli botanist and statesman; former *Global Weekly* Newsmaker of the Year; murderer of Carpathia; incognito, the King David Hotel, Jerusalem

**Leah Rose**, late thirties; former head nurse, Arthur Young Memorial Hospital, Palatine, Illinois; on Trib Force assignment en route to Mizpe Ramon

**Hattie Durham**, early thirties; former Pan-Continental flight attendant; former personal assistant to Carpathia; on Trib Force assignment in Israel

**Al B. (aka “Albie”)**, late forties; native of Al Basrah, north of Kuwait; pilot; former international black marketer; assisting Rayford at Mizpe Ramon

**David Hassid**, midtwenties; high-level director for the GC; presumed dead in plane crash; actually en route to Mizpe Ramon

**Mac McCullum**, late fifties; pilot for Carpathia; presumed dead in plane crash; actually en route to Mizpe Ramon

**Abdullah Smith**, early thirties; former Jordanian fighter pilot; first officer, Phoenix 216; presumed dead in plane crash; actually en route to Mizpe Ramon

**Hannah Palemoon**, late twenties; GC nurse; presumed dead in plane crash; actually en route to Mizpe Ramon

**Ming Toy**, early twenties; widow; former guard at the Belgium Facility for Female Rehabilitation (Buffer); AWOL from the GC; Strong Building, Chicago

**Chang Wong**, seventeen; Ming Toy's brother; new employee, Global Community Headquarters, New Babylon

**Lukas ("Laslos") Miklos**, midfifties; lignite-mining magnate; lost wife, pastor, and pastor's wife to Nicolae Carpathia's guillotines; in hiding, Greece, United Carpathian States

**Gustaf Zuckerman Jr. (aka "Zeke" or "Z")**, early twenties; document forger and disguise specialist; lost father to guillotine; fugitive in exile, Strong Building, Chicago

**Steve Plank (aka Pinkerton Stephens)**, fiftyish; former editor of *Global Weekly*; former public relations director for Carpathia; assumed dead in wrath of the Lamb earthquake; undercover with GC Peacekeeping forces

**Unknown male**, fifteen; escaped loyalty mark center in Ptolemaïs, Greece, with Albie's and Buck's help; whereabouts unknown

**Unknown female**, sixteen; escaped loyalty mark center in Ptolemaïs, Greece, with Albie's and Buck's help; whereabouts unknown

*The Enemies*

**Nicolae Jetty Carpathia**, midthirties; former president of Romania; former secretary-general, United Nations; self-appointed Global Community potentate; assassinated in Jerusalem; resurrected at GC palace complex, New Babylon; visiting Jerusalem

**Leon Fortunato**, early fifties; former supreme commander and Carpathia's right hand; now Most High Reverend Father of Carpathianism, proclaiming the potentate as the risen god; in Jerusalem with Carpathia



# PROLOGUE

*From The Mark*

“WE CAN ALL keep our fingers crossed,” Mac said. “I’ve seen those Quasis do amazing things based solely on what the flight management system onboard computer tells it to do. But this is a long flight on its own, and I’ve asked it to do some interesting stuff, barring turbulence.”

“Cross our fingers?” Hannah said. “Only God can make this work. You’re the expert, Captain McCullum, but if this thing goes down anywhere but deep in the Mediterranean, it won’t take long for someone to discover no one was aboard.”

This plane was not free-falling toward the Mediterranean. No, this multimillion-Nick marvel of modern technology

was accelerating, her burner cans hot, the vapor shimmering in a long trail. The strange attitude and angle sent the craft careening toward the shore approximately three-quarters of a mile south of the crowd.

The Quasi and ostensibly her two-man crew and two passengers slammed the beach perfectly perpendicular at near the speed of sound. The first impression of the shocked-to-silence crowd had to be the same as Buck's. The screaming jet engines still resonated even after the plane disintegrated, hidden in a billowing globe of angry black-and-orange flames. An eerie silence swept in, followed less than half a second later by the nauseating sound of the impact, a thundering explosion accompanied by the roar and hiss of the raging fire.

Buck hurried to his car and phoned Rayford. "The ship is down on the shore. No one could have survived it. On my way back to the voice that will cry in the wilderness."

Buck was struck by an unusual emotion as he merged into traffic that crawled toward the ancient city. It was as if he had seen his comrades go down in that plane. He knew it was empty, yet there had been such a dramatic finality to the ruse. He wished he knew whether it was the end of something or the beginning of something. Could he hope the GC was too busy to thoroughly investigate the site? Fat chance.

All Buck knew was that what he had endured in three and a half years was a walk in the park compared to what was coming. The entire drive back he spent in silent prayer for every loved one and Trib Force member. Buck had little doubt that the indwelt Antichrist would not hesitate to use

his every resource to quash the rebellion scheduled to rise against him the next day.

Buck had never been fearful, never one to back down in the face of mortal danger. But Nicolae Carpathia was evil personified, and the next day Buck would be in the line of fire when the battle of the ages between good and evil for the very souls of men and women would burst from the heavens, and all hell would break loose on earth.



*Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."*

*So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.*

REVELATION 16:1-2





# CHAPTER 1

RAYFORD STEELE SLEPT fitfully and awoke tangled in a prickly woolen blanket, knees drawn to his chest and fists balled under his chin. He bolted from the cot and peered out of his tiny makeshift quarters near Mizpe Ramon in the Negev Desert.

The sun cast an eerie, orange glow, but it would soon grow harsh and yellow, shimmering off rock and sand. The thermometer would exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit by noon—another typical day in the United Carpathian States.

Engaged in the riskiest endeavor of his life, Rayford had cast his lot with God and the miracle of technology. There was no hiding a jury-rigged airstrip on the desert floor—not from the stratospheric cameras of the Global Community.

Ridiculously vulnerable, Rayford and his ragtag team of flying rebels—having arrived by the dozens from around the globe—were at the mercy of the most audacious ruse imaginable.

His comrade in the enemy's lair had planted evidence in the Global Community database that the massive effort at Mizpe Ramon was an exercise of the GC's. As long as GC Security and Intelligence personnel bought the great "lie in the sky," Rayford and his extended Tribulation Force would continue what he called Operation Eagle. The name was inspired by the prophecy in Revelation 12:14: "The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."

Dr. Tsion Ben-Judah, spiritual mentor of the Tribulation Force, taught that the "woman" represented God's chosen people; the "two wings," land and air; "her place," Petra—the city of stone; "a time," one year—thus "a time and times and half a time" to be three and a half years; and the "serpent," Antichrist.

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

He dressed in a khaki shirt and shorts and went looking for Albie, his second-in-command. The helpers, rallied via the Internet by Rayford's daughter, Chloe, from the safe

house in Chicago, had only recently finished the landing strip. They had alternated shifts; some were instructed in flight plans by the same personnel who had checked them in and verified the mark of the believer on their foreheads, while others ran heavy equipment or toiled as laborers.

“Here, Chief,” Albie said, as Rayford took in the row after row of helicopters, jets, and even the occasional prop plane lining the far side of the strip. “First mission accomplished.”

The small, dark, former black marketer, nicknamed after his home city of Al Basrah, wore his bogus GC deputy commander uniform and had in tow a large young man who, Rayford was not surprised to learn, was from California.

“George Sebastian,” the tall, thick blond said, extending a powerful hand.

“Rayf—”

“Oh, I know who you are, sir,” George said. “Pretty sure everybody here does.”

“Let’s hope nobody outside here does,” Rayford said. “So you’re Albie’s choice for chopper lead.”

“Well, he, uh, asked that I refer to him as Commander Elbaz, but yes, sir.”

“What do we like about him?” Rayford asked Albie.

“Experienced. Smart. Knows how to handle a bird.”

“Fine by me. Wish I had time to socialize, George, but—”

“If you have just another minute, Captain Steele . . .”

Rayford glanced at his watch. “Walk with us, George.”

They headed to the south end of the new airstrip, Rayford’s

eyes and ears alert for unfriendly skies. "I'll make it quick, sir. It's just that I like to tell people how it happened with me."

"It?"

"You know, sir."

Rayford loved these stories, but there was a time and place for everything, and this was neither.

"Nothing dramatic, Captain. Had a chopper instructor, Jeremy Murphy, who always told me Jesus was coming to take Christians to heaven. 'Course, I thought he was a nutcase, and I even got him in trouble for proselytizing on the job. But he wouldn't quit. He was a good instructor, but I didn't want a thing to do with the other stuff. I was loving life—newly married, you know."

"Sure."

"He invited me to church and everything. I never went. Then the big day happens. Millions missing everywhere. Smart as I'm supposed to be, I actually tried calling him to see if my session was called off that day 'cause of all the chaos and everything. Later that night somebody found his clothes on a chair in front of his TV."

Rayford stopped and studied George. He would have enjoyed hearing more, but the clock was ticking. "Didn't take you long after that, did it?"

George shook his head. "I went cold. I felt so lucky I hadn't been killed. I prayed, I mean right then, that I would remember the name of his church. And I did, but hardly anybody was there. Anyway, I found somebody who knew what was going on, they reminded me what Murphy had

been telling me, and they prayed with me. I've been a believer ever since. My wife too."

"My story's almost the same," Rayford said, "and maybe one of these days I'll have time to tell you. But—"

"Sir," the young man said, "I need another second."

"I don't want to be rude, son, but—"

"You need to hear him out, Cap," Albie said.

Rayford sighed.

George pointed to the other end of the airstrip. "I brought samples of the cargo that's followin' me, soon as the strip can handle a transport."

"Cargo?"

"Weapons."

"Not in the market."

"These are free, sir."

"Still—"

"Our base trained for combat," George said. "When Carpathia told the nations to destroy 90 percent of their weapons and send the other 10 percent to him, you can imagine how that went over."

"The U.S. was the largest contributor," Rayford said.

"But I'll bet we also held on to more."

"What've you got?"

"Probably more than you need. Want to see the samples?"



David Hassid sat in the front passenger seat of the rented van with his solar-powered laptop. Leah Rose was driving.

Behind her, Hannah Palemoon sat next to Mac McCullum, while Abdullah Smith lay on his back across the third seat. They had spent the night hidden behind a rock outcropping a mile and a half off the main road, midway between Resurrection Airport in Amman, Jordan, and Mizpe Ramon. The last thing they wanted was to lead the GC to Operation Eagle.

David found on the Net that he, Hannah, Mac, and Abdullah were still presumed dead from the airplane crash in Tel Aviv the day before, but Security and Intelligence personnel were combing the wreckage. "How soon before they realize we're at large?" Hannah said.

Mac shook his head. "I hope they assume we'd a been vaporized in a deal like that. Pray they find small bits of shoes or somethin' they decide is clothing material."

"I can't raise Chang," David said, angrier than he let on.

"I imagine the boy's busy," Mac said.

"Not for this long. He knows I need to be sure he's all right."

"Worryin' gets us nowhere," Mac said. "Look at Smitty."

David turned in his seat. Abdullah slept soundly. Hannah and Leah had hit it off and were planning a mobile first-aid center at the airstrip. "We all fly back to the States when the operation is over," Leah said.

"Not me," David said, and he felt the eyes of the others. "I'm going to Petra before anybody else even gets there. That place is going to need a tech center, and Chang and I have already put a satellite in geosynchronous orbit above it."

His phone chirped, and he dug it from his belt. “Hey,” he heard. “You know where I am, because I’m on schedule.”

“You don’t need to talk in code, Buck. Nothing’s more secure than these phones.”

“Force of habit. Listen, somebody missed their rendezvous.”

“Just say who, Buck. If we were going to be compromised, it’s happened already.”

“Hattie.”

“She was with Leah in Tel Aviv. Then she was supposed to—”

“I know, David,” Buck said. “She was to check in with me at dawn today in Jerusalem.”

“The old man’s there and okay?”

“Scared to death, but yeah.”

“Tell him we’re with him.”

“No offense, David, but he knows that, and Hattie is a much bigger problem.”

“She’s got her alias, right?”

“David! Can we assume the obvious and deal with the problem? She’s supposed to be here, but I haven’t heard from her. I can’t go looking for her. Just let everybody know that if they hear from her, she needs to call me.”

“She crucial to your assignment?”

“No,” Buck said, “but if we don’t know where she is, we’re going to feel exposed.”

“The GC lists her deceased, just like us.”

“That could be what they want us to think they believe.”



“Hang on,” David said, turning to Leah. “What was Hattie supposed to do after you two split up?”

“Disguise herself as an Israeli, blend into the crowd in Tel Aviv, go to Jerusalem, check in with Buck, and watch for signs that Carpathia’s people recognized either Buck or Dr. Rosenzweig.”

“Then?”

“Lie low in Jerusalem until everything blew up there, then head back to Tel Aviv. Someone from the operation was going to pick her up and fly her back to Chicago while all the attention was on Jerusalem and the escape.”

David turned back to the phone. “Maybe she got spooked in Tel Aviv and never got to Jerusalem.”

“She needs to let me know that, David. I’ve got to hold Chaim’s hand for a while here, so inform everybody, will you?”



A few minutes after midnight, Chicago time, Dr. Tsion Ben-Judah knelt before his huge curved desk at the Strong Building and prayed for Chaim. The former rabbi’s confidence in his old mentor’s ability to play a modern-day Moses was only as strong as Chaim’s own. And while Rosenzweig had proved a quick and thorough study, he had left the United North American States still clearly resisting the mantle.

Tsion’s reverie was interrupted by the low tone on his computer that could be triggered by only a handful of people around the world who knew the code to summon him. He struggled to his feet and peered at the screen. “Dr.

Ben-Judah, I hope you're there," came the message from Chang Wong, the teenager David had left in his place at Global Community headquarters in New Babylon. "I am despairing for my life."

Tsion groaned and pulled his chair into place. He sat and pounded the keys. "I am here, my young brother. I know you must feel very much alone, but do not despair. The Lord is with you. He will give his angels charge over you. You have much to do as the point man for all the various activities of the Tribulation Force around the world. Yes, it is probably too much to ask of one so young, in years and in the faith, but we all must do what we have to. Tell me how I can encourage and help you so you can return to the task."

"I want to kill myself."

"Chang! Unless you have purposely jeopardized our mission, you need feel no such remorse. If you have made a mistake, reveal it so we can all adapt. But you have satellites to manipulate and monitor. You have records to keep in order, in case the enemy checks the various aliases and operations. We are nearly at zero hour, so do not lose heart. You can do this."

Chang's message came back: "I am in my room at the palace with everything set up the way Mr. Hassid and I designed. My machinations are filtered through a scrambler so complex that it would not be able to unravel itself. I could end my life right now and not affect the Tribulation Force."

"Stop this talk, Chang! We need you. You must stay in position and adjust the databases depending upon what we encounter. Now, quickly, please, what is the problem?"

“The problem is the mirror, Dr. Ben-Judah! I thought I could do this! I thought the mark that was forced on me would be an advantage. But it mocks me, and I hate it! I want to take a razor blade and slice it from my head, then slit my wrists and let God decide my fate.”

“God has decided, my friend. You have the seal of God upon you, according to our trusted brothers. You did not *accept* the mark of Antichrist, nor will you worship him.”

“But I have been studying your own writings, Doctor! The mark of the beast brings damnation, and the Bible says we can’t have both marks!”

“It says we cannot *take* both.”

“But the heroes, the martyrs, the brave ones accepted death for the sake of the truth! You said a true believer would be given the grace and courage to stand for his faith in the face of the blade.”

“Did you not resist? God is no liar. I have told people that they cannot lose the mark of the seal of God and that they need not worry they will lose heart because of their human weakness, but that God will grant them peace and courage to accept their fate.”

“That proves I am lost! I did not have that peace and courage! I resisted, yes, but I did not speak out for God. I cried like a baby. My father says I pleaded fear of the needle. When it became clear they were really going to do this, I *wanted* to die for my faith! I planned to resist till the end, though I knew my father would then find out about my sister and expose her too. Right up until the time they

stuck me, I was prepared to say no, to say that I was a believer in Christ.”

Tsion slumped in his chair. Could it be true? Was it possible God had not given Chang the power to resist unto death? And if not, was he not truly a believer? “Do me this favor,” he tapped in slowly. “Do not do anything rash for twenty-four hours. We need you, and there must be an answer. I do not want to gloss over it, for I confess it puzzles me too. Will you stay at the task and fight your temptation until I get back to you?”

Tsion stared at the screen for several minutes, worried he was already too late.



Rayford's breath caught when he saw what George Sebastian had apparently already shown Albie. “We’re not soldiers,” he said. “We’re flyers.”

“With these you can be soldiers too,” George said. “But it’s your call.”

“I wish it were *my* call,” Albie said. “If Carpathia’s troops are not our mortal enemies . . .”

George handed Rayford a weapon more than four feet long that weighed at least thirty-five pounds and had a built-in bipod. Rayford could barely heft it horizontally. “Carry it nose up,” George said.

“I won’t be carrying it at all,” Rayford said. “What in the world kind of ammo does this thing take?”

“Fifty-caliber, Captain,” George said, digging out a clip

of four six-inch bullets. "They weigh more than five ounces each, but get this, they have a range of four miles."

"C'mon!"

"I wouldn't lie to ya. A round leaves the chamber at three thousand feet a second, but it takes a full seven seconds to hit a target two miles away, considering deceleration, wind, all that."

"You couldn't hope for any kind of accuracy—"

"It's on record that a guy put five rounds within three inches of each other from a thousand yards. At two hundred yards you can put one of these through an inch of rolled steel."

"The recoil must be—"

"Enormous. And the sound? Without an earplug you could damage your hearing. Wanna try one?"

"Not on your life. I can't imagine a use for these monstrosities, and I sure wouldn't want to produce a sound that would alert the GC before the fun starts."

George pressed his lips together and shook his head. "Should have checked with you first. I've got a hundred of 'em on the way with all the ammo you'd need, some with incendiary tips."

"Dare I ask?"

"A primer inside makes the casing separate if it hits soft material."

"Like flesh?"

George nodded.

Rayford shook his head. "My flyers would never be able to manage these from the air, and that's top priority."

Albie said, "We'll store them. You never know."

"Wanna see the other?" George said.

"Not if it's anything like these," Rayford said.

"It's not." George carefully set the fifty-caliber back into the cargo hold. "These are designed to use from planes or ground vehicles," he said, producing a lightweight rifle and tossing it to Rayford. "No projectiles."

"Then what—?"

"It's a DEW, a directed energy weapon. From a little under half a mile you can shoot a concentrated beam of waves that penetrates clothing and heats any moisture on the skin to 130 degrees in a couple of seconds."

"What does it do to a man's innards?"

"Not a thing. Nonlethal."

Rayford handed it back. "Impressive," he said. "And we appreciate it. My problem is, I don't have combat troops, and even if I did, we'd be no match for the GC."

George shrugged. "They'll be here if you need 'em."



Had the day's prospects not been so dire and Buck not so worried about Hattie's whereabouts, he might have chuckled at the sight of Dr. Rosenzweig. The old man opened his door to Buck's knock at the King David Hotel wearing baggy boxer shorts, a sleeveless T-shirt, and the sandals he was to wear with the brown robe. "Cameron, my friend, forgive me; come in, come in."

Buck was used to Rosenzweig's normal appearance: wiry,

clean shaven, slight, in his late sixties, pale for an Israeli, and with hazel eyes and wisps of wild white hair reminiscent of pictures of Albert Einstein. Normally the decorated statesman and Nobel Prize winner wore wire-rimmed glasses, bulky sweaters, baggy trousers, and comfortable shoes.

Buck found it hard to get used to his old friend with burnt amber skin, very short dark hair, a bushy beard and mustache, deep brown contact lenses, and a protruding chin caused by a tiny appliance in his back teeth. "Zeke sure did a job on you," Buck said, aware that surviving a horrific plane crash had also left its effects on Chaim.

Dr. Rosenzweig retreated to a chair near where he had laid out his Bible and two commentaries, which he had hidden in his luggage for the flight from the United North American States. A half glass of water sat next to him on a lamp table. His roomy, hooded, monklike robe lay on the bed.

"Why not dress, brother?"

The old man sighed. "I am not ready for the uniform yet, Cameron. I am not ready for the task," Chaim said, his speech altered not only by the appliance but also from damage to his jaw.

Buck checked the closet and found a hotel robe. "Put this on for now," he said. "We've got a couple of hours."

Dr. Rosenzweig seemed grateful to be helped into the terry-cloth garment, but it was white and a one-size-fits-all. The contrast between it and his new skin color, and the hem bunching up on the floor when he sat again, made him look no less comical.

Chaim lowered his head, then looked at the hotel name on the breast pocket. "King David," he said. "Do you not think we should have 'Patriarch Moses' sewn onto the brown one?"

Buck smiled. He could not imagine the pressure on his friend. "God will be with you, Doctor," he said.

Suddenly Rosenzweig shuddered and slid to the floor. He turned and knelt, his elbows on the chair. "Oh, God, oh, God," Chaim prayed, then quickly tore off his sandals, casting them aside.

Buck himself was driven to his knees with emotion so deep he believed he could not speak. Just before he closed his eyes he noticed the rising sun reach between the curtains and bathe the room. He too slipped off his shoes, then buried his face in his hands, flat on the floor.

Chaim's voice was weak. "Who am I that I should go and bring the children of Israel out?"

Buck, despite the heat of the day, found himself chilled and trembling. He was overwhelmed with the conviction that he should answer Chaim, but who was he to speak for God? He had drunk in the teaching of Dr. Ben-Judah and overheard his counsel to Chaim on the calling of Moses. But he had not realized that the dialogue had been burned into his brain.

Silence hung in the room. Buck allowed himself to peek for an instant before squeezing his eyes shut again. The room was so bright that the orange stayed in his vision the way Chaim's question lingered in the air. The man wept aloud.

"God will certainly be with you," Buck whispered, and



Chaim stopped crying. Buck added, "And this shall be a sign to you that God has sent you: When you have brought the people out, you shall serve him."

The old man said, "Indeed, when I come to the remnant of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

Buck pressed his fingers against his temples. "As God said to Moses," he said, "'I Am Who I Am.' Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I Am has sent me to you. The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is God's name forever, and this is his memorial to all generations. 'The Lord God of your fathers has seen what has been done to you and will bring you up out of the affliction to a land of safety and refuge.' They will heed your voice; and you shall come to the king of this world and you shall say to him, 'The Lord God has met with me; and now, please, let us journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.' But the king will not let you go, so God will stretch out his hand and strike those who would oppose you."

"But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice?" Chaim said, so faintly that Buck could barely hear him. "Suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you'?"

Buck rolled onto his back and sat up, suddenly frustrated and impatient with Chaim. He stared at the old man kneeling there, and Buck's head was abuzz, his eyes full of the color permeating the room. Buck had not felt so close to God since

he had witnessed Dr. Ben-Judah's conversing with Eli and Moishe at the Wailing Wall. "Reach out your hand and take the water," he said, suddenly feeling authoritative.

Chaim turned to stare at him. "Cameron, I did not know you knew Hebrew."

Buck knew enough not to argue, though he knew no Hebrew and was thinking and forming his words in English. "The water," he said.

Chaim held his stare, then turned and grasped the glass. The water turned to blood, and Chaim set it down so quickly that it sloshed onto the back of his hand.

Buck said, "This is so that they may believe the Lord God has appeared to you. Now take the water again."

Chaim timidly reached for the glass, and when he touched it, the blood became water, even on his hand.

"Now turn your hand toward God's servant," Buck said. Chaim set the water down again and gestured questioningly toward Buck. And Buck was paralyzed, unable even to move his lips.

"Cameron, are you all right?"

Buck could not respond, light-headed from having stopped breathing. He tried to signal Chaim with his eyes, but the man looked terrified. Chaim pulled his hand back to his chest, as if afraid of its power, and Buck dropped, gasping, his palms on the floor. When he had caught his breath, he said, "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign."

“Cameron! I am sorry! I—”

But Buck continued, “And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”

Buck sat back on his haunches, hands on his thighs, exhausted.

Chaim said, “But I am not eloquent, even now since God has spoken to me. I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

“Who has made man’s mouth?” Buck said. “Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Has not the Lord? Now therefore, go, and he will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

Chaim turned away again and knelt at the chair. “O my Lord,” he cried out, “is there no other you can send?”

Buck knew the story. But there was no Aaron. Tsion was at the safe house, not having felt led to help in person. The only other member of the Trib Force with Jewish blood, though he had grown up in Poland, was David Hassid, and he had his own special skills and assignment. Anyway, there was no time to disguise him. If David suddenly appeared in public, he would expose the others who were assumed dead in the plane crash—at least for now.

Buck waited for God to give him an answer for Chaim, but nothing came.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

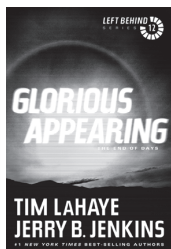
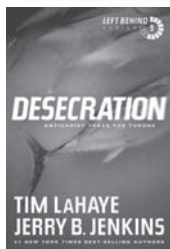
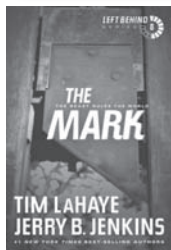
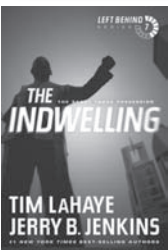
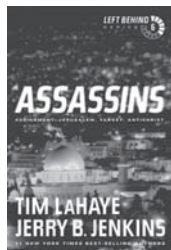
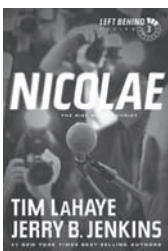
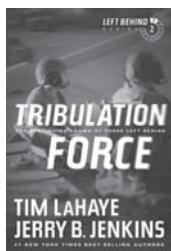
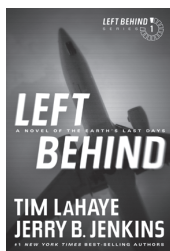
Dr. LaHaye earned a doctor of ministry degree from Western Theological Seminary and received an honorary doctor of literature degree from Liberty University. For 25 years he pastored one of the nation's outstanding churches in San Diego, which grew to three locations. During that time he founded two 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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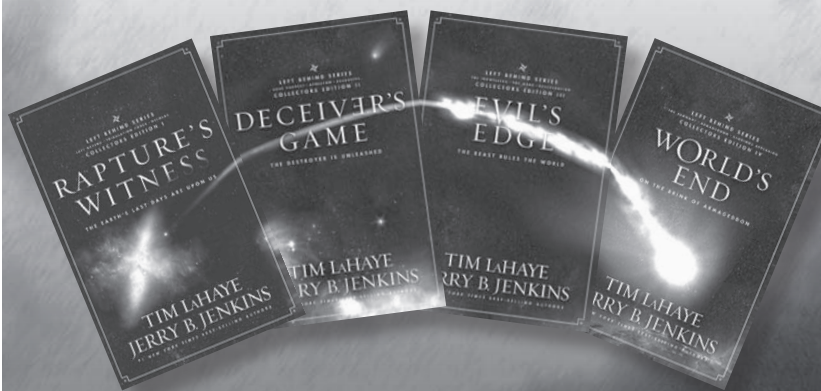
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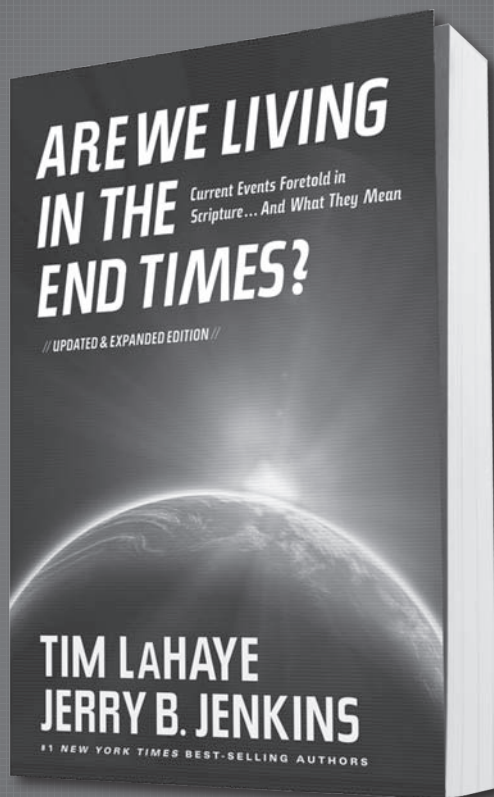
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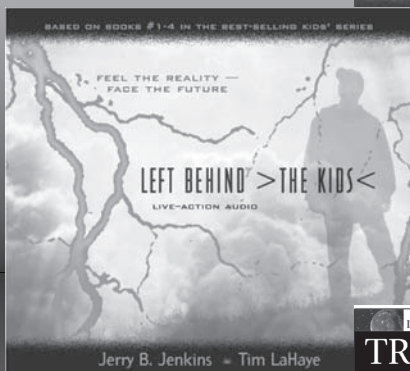
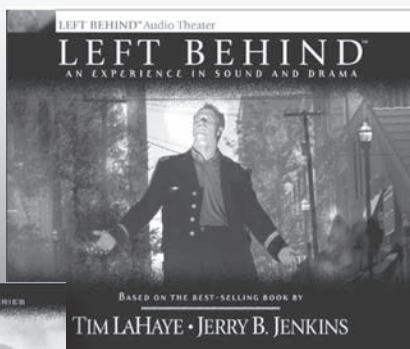
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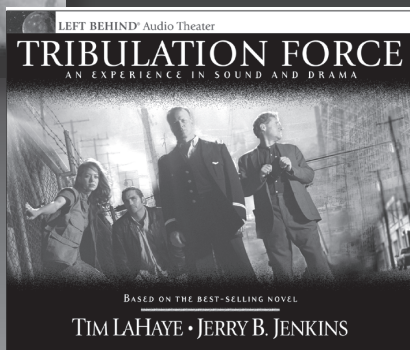
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