

A man in a white hoodie is running forward, holding a glowing sword. The background is dark with faint circular patterns. The title 'RISE OF THE FALLEN' is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

RISE OF THE
FALLEN



CHUCK
BLACK

READERS GUIDE

CHAPTER I

The Reality of Angels

Are angels real, or are they just the creation of man's imagination and belong in the fantasy category with elves, goblins, hobbits, and fairies? According to Scripture, angels are very real, with specific purposes and responsibilities. The Bible references angels nearly three hundred times. In ancient texts they are called "watchers," and in 1 Corinthians 4:9 the apostles are called a "spectacle" to the world, to men, and to the angels. But angels do more than just watch us. God's angels are ministers, messengers, warriors, worshipers, and instruments of judgment. Their very existence ought to cause us to be careful of our behavior.

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. (Hebrews 13:2)

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. (1 Timothy 5:21)

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

The chapter opens with Validus and his men embroiled in a fierce battle. The affairs of men and of angels are inextricably entwined, and this battle scene attempts to depict this principle as the war for the unborn child rages on. The Bible tells us that life is precious because God created it. Men and women are made in the image of God and thus should be cherished and respected.

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)

Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. (Genesis 9:6)

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. (Psalm 139:13–14)

Abortion hurts everyone: the child, the mother, the father, the community, and God. The beautiful thing about God is that He is always ready to forgive and to heal. His love overcomes all tragedy if we are willing to receive it.

To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. (Daniel 9:9)

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. (Acts 10:38)

CHAPTER 2

The River of Heaven

There is great speculation about heaven. Man does not have the skill or capacity to portray even a fraction of the glory of such a place. Isaiah and John tried, but even their descriptions of the divine abode seem inadequate, and even lesser still are the speculative depictions in this book. The text in **bold** helps discriminate biblical truth from the speculative descriptions of fiction. In this chapter, the river of heaven is described by John in the book of Revelation.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1–2)

The Persons of God

How does one describe God? As a new angel experiencing life for the first time, Validus tries to describe his Creator, but once again words are inadequate. The

Trinity of God may never be fully understood this side of death, if ever. We do know that God has chosen to describe Himself as three in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. (1 John 5:7)

And we learn in John that “the Word” is Jesus Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The Hebrew word for God is *El* or *Eloah*. The suffix *-im* indicates a plurality of the same God, and thus Elohim contains an inference to the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew words for those references are *Elohim HaAv*, *Ben Elohim*, and *Ruach Elohim* respectively. As another point of reference, Yeshua Ben Elohim is Jesus, Son of God.

The Bond of Brotherhood

There is a bond that happens among a group of men or women that is unbreakable when tragedy or life-threatening encounters are endured together with attitudes of selfless sacrifice. The “no man left behind” creed is an extremely powerful motivator for the men and women of the United States military. It cements the bonds of brotherhood that transcend potential barriers to friendship such as race, language, and social status. Validus and Niturni experience this type of bonding when facing the peril of the blackness at the stairway. David and Jonathan had a bond like this when they faced their enemies in battle. The Bible talks about this in Proverbs.

A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

Most people desire such a bond, but it is only attainable by those who are willing to be completely selfless and put others before themselves, even unto death. Sounds like Jesus, doesn't it? He wants that bond with us.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. (1 Thessalonians 5:9–10)

CHAPTER 3

Jesus the Creator

This chapter gives us a very speculative view of the Creation account as depicted in Genesis. One amazing reveal in the New Testament is by whose hand the Creation was performed. In John 1 and in Colossians 1 there is nothing left to interpretation as to the Author of creation.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:15–17)

Imagine the piercing cries of blasphemy from the religious elite of the day! But what a beautiful irony to behold: the Giver of life gives His life to save that which He loves most. By His own hand He created that which would one day turn on Him. It was His love for us that kept Him on the cross. Even as He hung there under the curses and the abuse of the wicked, His hand still held the very molecules of the universe together. What love!

Again, please note the **bold** passages in the story, as they are direct references to biblical truths. You can find them here:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1–3)

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:14–18)

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:21–23)

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4–7)

The Lair of Lies and the Lure of Pride

In this chapter, Niturni is swayed by the deceptions of Lucifer and the lure of pride. How quickly we can get into trouble when we depart from truth and start to believe a lie. Often it is pride that causes us to *want* to believe a lie.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)

When Lucifer and his angels fell in sin, their eternal fate was sealed. Unlike man, there does not seem to be any indication at all in Scripture that forgiveness will be offered to them. This is probably because they beheld the glory and holiness of God and still chose to rebel. That is not the case for humanity. We are given a chance to be redeemed through the shed blood of Jesus Christ because we have not beheld the full glory of God.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment . . . then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. (2 Peter 2:4, 9)

CHAPTER 4

When God's Ways Don't Make Sense

Validus is derailed when he is reassigned and loses his command of the North American continent. Frustration, anger, and confusion are inevitable emotions we can experience when we don't understand what God is doing in our lives. It is important to remember during these times that God's love transcends our circumstances, that He is faithful, and that He knows what's ahead—His plans to prosper us. The closer our relationship is with Him, the stronger our faith will be to help us walk through trying times. We can also know that He understands we are frail, emotional humans.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15–16)

CHAPTER 5

The Five "I Wills" of Satan

God hates pride because it destroys all that is good. In Proverbs 6:16–19 we find a list of seven things that God hates, and pride is at the top of the list. Pride

was the very first sin. In this chapter, Validus reflects back to the great fall of Lucifer and one-third of the angels because of pride. This fall corrupted God's perfect creation. This is vividly described in Isaiah and Romans.

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
 How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the
 nations! For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven,
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the
 mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will
 ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."
 (Isaiah 14:12–14)

Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of
 corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we
 know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs
 together until now. (Romans 8:21–22)

The Genesis Accord

There is nothing in the Bible that suggests the existence of an agreement like the Genesis Accord. However, it is interesting to note that there seems to be some sort of "rules of engagement" established in the realm of spiritual warfare. For example, in Job 1, Satan is able to come with the "sons of God," probably angels, who are presenting themselves to the Lord. It raises many questions, like, how was Satan able to gain access to heaven and even the very presence of God without an all-out war? Why did God allow it? In Luke 8:31 when Jesus is about to cast out the demons, they seem to know where they are going and plead for an exemption to the Abyss. Do all demons cast out go to the Abyss? Why did the demons cause the swine to run over a cliff and kill themselves? Were they then allowed to roam the earth again? It seems as though there are some rules of spiritual engagement that angels and demons must both abide by. The Genesis Accord is just an inferred speculative perspective of what those rules of engagement might look like.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves
 before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. (Job 1:6)

And they [demons] begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. (Luke 8:31)

CHAPTER 6

Angelic Orders and Paradise

Bible scholars have surmised for centuries that there are orders to the angelic hosts of heaven. Michael appears to be a warrior, Gabriel a messenger, others ministers, and still others perform additional heavenly duties. Whether there is an entire order of angels assigned is speculative, but one of the duties of some of the angels seems to be to carry the dead to Paradise. Although there is not sufficient space to present a theological case for Paradise being co-located with hell in the heart of the earth before the death of Jesus Christ, the portrayal of Abraham's bosom, or Paradise as Jesus called it on the cross, is a vivid depiction of angelic duty and of the destination of the righteous dead pre-Christ.

So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16:22–23)

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us. (Luke 16:26)

The Bible says that when Jesus died, He descended into hell and carried a multitude of captives to heaven. The post-Christ location of Paradise is now heaven. Please take some time to study this important theological theme. Besides Luke 16:19–31, other verses to reference are Matthew 12:40, Luke 23:43, Ephesians 4:8–10, 1 Peter 3:18–19, and Acts 2:29–31.

The Apparent Triumph of Evil

Validus is distraught about the apparent triumph of evil after watching the battle for Kish. We should expect no less from such a holy being and, quite

honestly, from ourselves, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. David mourned such a state as well, but God always promises hope, peace, and justice in the end.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm. For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. (Psalm 37:7–9)

When God Speaks

Any time in history that the voice of God hit the ears of a human, something significant was about to happen. There are numerous examples in Scripture: Adam, Noah, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Paul, and John to name a few. One can imagine the anticipation of the angels and the apprehension of the demons whenever such an event happened. When Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Comforter, the order of the universe changed, and now we have the privilege of “hearing” the voice of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit . . . if we are listening.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

Think about the great things God is waiting to do in your life. All you have to do is hear Him through His Spirit; then say yes!

CHAPTERS 7–8

Taking Up the Cross

Now Validus embraces his mission and submits to the call of God. As Christians we oftentimes may feel God calling us to some duty or place that we are hesitant to accept. God does not call lightly, nor does He take our response lightly, whether it is good or bad. There is great adventure and opportunity when we submit to God and perhaps loss if we don't. This is quite evident when a rich young ruler encounters Jesus.

Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:21–22)

The First Judgment

The Bible talks about two great judgments made by God on the wicked of the earth (see 2 Peter 3:5–7). The first was by water, and in Genesis we get a glimpse into the heart of God as He considered both the evil of the world and the heart of one just man.

So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” (Genesis 6:7)

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. (Genesis 6:8–9)

The second judgment will be by fire, but it is important to remember that God’s wrath is not appointed for those who love Him, but for the wicked and evildoers of the world. We must share the love of God with all who are willing so that they may be spared the second judgment.

Angelic Worship

We cannot begin to fathom the impact a face-to-face encounter with God will have on us. Our best insight into such an event is by reading about the reactions of others who have experienced it. Consider words like, “Fear came upon me, and trembling” (Job 4:14), “Woe is me, for I am undone!” (Isaiah 6:5), and “I fell at His feet as dead” (Revelation 1:17). The reason for such responses is a sense of extreme holiness and power. The words in this chapter are lifted straight out of the book of Revelation when John gets a glorious glimpse of the worship of God in heaven.

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Revelation 4:8)

CHAPTER 9

Devolution

It is perfectly ironic that man has devised a theory that eliminates God and evolves man when actually the exact opposite occurs. The further a person gets from God, the more wisdom and knowledge slip away and sin begins to rule. Submitting to evil ultimately will make us “less human.” Essentially we devolve without God; we don’t evolve. The Bible explains this in Romans 1 and in Titus 1.

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. (Titus 1:15–16)

The droxans, devolved demons, described in this chapter are purely speculative. But if submitting to abject evil creates rapists, pedophiles, serial killers, and terrorists, we can only imagine what it might do to a demon. Contrary to living without God, living with God brings wisdom and understanding as proclaimed in Proverbs.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)

CHAPTER 10

Guardian Angels

The concept of guardian angels is old and appealing. Although we know very little about the reality of such an order of angels, Jesus certainly inspired such contemplation when He talked about the children who wanted to be near Him.

Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 18:10)

CHAPTERS 11–12

The Ignorance and Apathy of Humanity

In the days of Noah, the people had distanced themselves so far from God that they were apathetic toward Him and completely ignorant of the impending doom. Jesus gives the world a very dramatic parallel warning when the disciples ask Him about the end times. Jesus' warning in Matthew 24 seems more pertinent today than at any other time in the past two thousand years.

For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:38–39)

Unlike the rest of the world, those who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have been given the game plan and will not be surprised when it happens. We will be prepared just as Noah was.

Preacher of Righteousness

In the world today, words like *righteousness*, *salvation*, and *judgment* are not popular words. In fact, in many circles these words have a negative connotation. It was probably very much the same, if not worse, in the days of Noah. Second Peter 2:5 calls Noah “a preacher of righteousness.” Noah didn't just live a life that honored God; he preached and tried to persuade the world of the truth of God. God has commissioned us to do the same.

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15–16)

Water and the Fallen

It is important to note that the special treatment of water in regard to the Fallen is purely speculative and has no basis in a literal interpretation of Scripture. Liberty was taken in regard to water and its effects on the demons because of the inferences throughout Scripture of those who hunger and thirst but are not satisfied because they do not know God. Jesus is the only one who can satisfy spiritual hunger and thirst, something the demons will never know.

It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams, and look—he eats; but he awakes, and his soul is still empty; or as when a thirsty man dreams, and look—he drinks; but he awakes, and indeed he is faint, and his soul still craves: so the multitude of all the nations shall be, who fight against Mount Zion. (Isaiah 29:8)

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35)

The reference to Hades containing no water is inferred from the rich man’s statement about asking Abraham to have Lazarus dip his finger in water to cool his tongue.

Then he cried and said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” (Luke 16:24)

CHAPTER 13

Four Bad Dudes

In this chapter, we learn that Validus played a part in binding four angels to the bottom of the Euphrates River. We don’t know the actual story behind the four angels who are being reserved to execute judgment on the earth, but they must be very powerful and very evil. In Revelation, we learn that these four angels will be responsible for killing one-third of mankind. If that happened today, nearly 2.4 billion people would die at their hands.

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. (Revelation 9:13–15)

The Noahidic Accord

As with the Genesis Accord, there is no literal interpretation of Scripture that would allow one to believe an agreement like the Noahidic Accord existed. This speculative and fictional aspect is derived from subtle inferences in the Bible and observation. The Noahidic Accord is simply to give the book a construct for the remainder of the story.

CHAPTER 14

Translation

Hebrews 13:2 says that some people have “entertained angels” without knowing it. When the spiritual world intersects the physical world, it is a strange event. Something unseen and untouchable suddenly appears and becomes very real . . . very physical. Speculation about the science of such a translation is fascinating. How it happens is quite a mystery, but angels apparently have the ability to do it at will and with such skill that humans would never suspect them.

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. (Hebrews 13:2)

One day all who believe in Jesus will be translated to the spiritual realm just as Enoch was when he walked with God.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5, κῑν)

Betrayal

Nothing strikes at the heart like betrayal. When Validus faces Niturni in battle for the first time, it is evidence of the completion of Niturni's betrayal. You can imagine the sadness of Jesus when He discovered in Judas's heart a willingness and desire to betray Him. Betrayal is one of Satan's sharpest weapons, for it cuts deep.

And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him. (John 13:2)

We can be grateful that we serve a God who will never betray us. His faithfulness is incomparable. Even when we are not faithful to Him, He remains faithful to us.

Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments. (Deuteronomy 7:9)

CHAPTER 15

One Heart

Throughout the Bible there is a truth that rings true from Genesis to Revelation. It is a truth that brings great inspiration to all, from the lowliest to the highest. God doesn't look on the outward appearance of a man or a woman but on their heart, and with one heart perfectly aligned with God, miracles are accomplished. It is the stuff of valiant legends, for out of the meekest of men and women, heroes arise because God will use them for His great purposes.

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. (2 Chronicles 16:9, KJV)

CHAPTERS 17–18

The Tower of Babel

These two chapters take liberty with history to create a confrontation between Eber, the great-grandson of Shem, and Nimrod, the grandson of Ham. There are legends that portray such a meeting between Nimrod and Abraham, but in both cases, there is no biblical basis for such an event occurring. We do know that Nimrod was a man who had great power and influence. He built many cities, and one of them was Babel, the city that stood in defiance to God.

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.” And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (Genesis 10:8–10)

At Babel, humanity was divided because God confused the languages of men. There are different theological views as to why Eber named his son Peleg, which means “to be divided,” but the more accepted view is that the earth was divided because of language. Since this is a fictional account, this is not necessarily an endorsement of this view.

To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided. (Genesis 10:25)

CHAPTER 19

Dealing with Conflict

Validus and Tren deal with an issue that could be a hindrance to their working together on the mission. There are typically three ways we deal with conflict. The first is to be passive and avoid the conflict, but that only causes the prob-

lem to fester and become worse over time. The second is to be angry and aggressive, but that only creates greater conflict and often destroys relationships. The third is the biblical way. Scripture gives us clear guidelines on how to deal with conflict.

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” (Matthew 18:15–16)

Ironically, if we deal with conflict in a humble and biblical way, stronger relationships can be the result, just as is the case with Validus and Tren.

CHAPTER 20

The Least

Persimus reminds Validus of Niturni’s wise words of insight as to God’s ways. He tells Validus, “It is through the least that God often works the most.” This is evident through the story of Gideon.

So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” And the LORD said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.” (Judges 6:15–16)

God is a champion of the lowly, for they are the ones who often have a heart of humility through which God can work. Then when great things happen, it is God who receives the glory and not man.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the

things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Corinthians 1:26–29)

CHAPTER 21

The Judgment of Souls

This chapter is filled with many elements of spiritual warfare, but the most sobering is the judgment of the souls of men and women at the point of their death. As much as the world wants to believe that there are many ways to heaven, from “being good” to belief in a variety of “higher powers,” the Bible is explicitly clear that there is only one way to heaven. Jesus said He is “the way, the truth, and the life” and that “no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). As we discovered in Luke 16, when people who believe in Jesus die, the angels carry them to heaven. When a person dies without Jesus, he or she is delivered to Hades, where the “worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44).

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Hebrews 9:27–28)

The judgment of an unbelieving soul is a very sobering thing. Such a reality should rouse us to action to be passionately engaged in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet.

CHAPTER 22

The Great Prophecy of Messiah

This chapter portrays an epic battle between the Prince of Persia and the arch-angels Michael and Gabriel. This scene is derived from two passages in the ninth and tenth chapters of the book of Daniel. The first passage is of the prophecy given to Daniel by Gabriel regarding the coming Messiah. It is the

first explicit reference to the Messiah given in Scripture to the people of Israel, and it is one of the most profound and precise prophecies regarding the coming of the Son of God. With some biblical study, you will discover that from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem given to Nehemiah under King Artaxerxes to the announcement of Jesus as “the King” on the day of His triumphal entry, what we now call Palm Sunday, was exactly 483 years (69 weeks of years x 7 = 483 years). Historical records give evidence that this prophecy was fulfilled to the exact day! This prophecy is also why Jesus wept in Luke 19:41, because the people did not know of the time of His visitation even though they had been foretold by the prophet Daniel.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. (Daniel 9:25)

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” (Luke 19:41–42)

CHAPTER 23

Vexer-Possessors

The Bible describes numerous instances of demons both vexing and possessing humans. We find evidence of both in the following verses:

And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.
(Luke 6:18, κτν)

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.
(Matthew 8:28)

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Being “buffeted” by the Enemy is something all believers will face from time to time, but it is not something to fear. God promises to deliver us “from every evil work” (2 Timothy 4:18). Demon possession is also something believers never have to fear. Those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior have the Holy Spirit residing within them, and there is no place for an evil spirit there. Jesus alluded to this when He described the state of a man cleansed from evil spirits in Matthew 12.

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, “I will return to my house from which I came.” And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. (Matthew 12:43–45)

An “empty” man lives in a dangerous state. The only way for men and women to be protected from such demonic activity is to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior so that the Holy Spirit dwells within them and “occupies” their souls, keeping them safe from evil.

CHAPTER 24

Inside Information

God reveals things to people who are devoted to Him. It might be an unexplainable need to pray for someone in trouble even though you don’t know it. It might be a sense that a brother or sister in Christ has an emotional, physical, spiritual, or financial need. It might be the revelation of truth in your own life revealed by reading the living Word. It is even possible that God may reveal to you mysteries of fulfilled prophecies and truth as He did to Paul in Ephesians about the Gentiles being fellow heirs of the gospel. God gave Simeon and Anna special revelation as to the identity of Jesus Christ and His mission even when

He was just an infant (see Luke 2). That only comes to one who is walking daily with God in His Spirit.

Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. (Luke 2:29–32)

Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” (Luke 2:34–35)

It is exhilarating to receive a special word from God, because only His Spirit can reveal inside information that the world will never understand. Walk close to God, and listen for His whispers to your heart.

CHAPTER 25

Drew, the Good Samaritan

Jesus used stories to dramatically make His points. His story of the good Samaritan is perhaps one of the most poignant examples there is of living the life of a follower of Jesus. Drew does this without understanding that he is fulfilling exactly what Jesus has called us to. It takes courage to love the needy and the hurting, and yet we don't even have to defend people from dangerous gangs. God asks us simply to offer mercy and compassion when the need arises.

“So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:36–37)

Let us pray that we will all have the courage to “go and do likewise”!

CHAPTER 26

Satan's Attempt to Kill the Messiah

From the time of Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit to Jesus' death on the cross, Satan tried multiple times to subvert God's plan for the Messiah to save mankind from sin. The first attempt was to use Herod to kill all the children in Bethlehem, but the Magi had been warned and so had Joseph. One could speculate that the spiritual battle for the Christ-child must have been as distressing as the physical tragedy that happened to countless innocent babes.

Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." (Matthew 2:12–13)

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." (Matthew 2:16–18)

CHAPTER 27

The Foolishness of Preaching

In this chapter, Validus states, "The message of the gospel has been given to men to share, not to angels." This is not to say that angels do not have a mission in presenting the gospel to the world, for one of the first declarations of the gospel was by the angels to the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth. However, the winning of souls does seem to be the exclusive duty of men and women and

not the angels. First Corinthians gives us an interesting perspective on why God chose this way:

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

When people become prideful about how wise they may be, it becomes a stumbling block to finding the real truth. God chose to use what appears to be foolishness so that the prideful and arrogant do not find it. Only when people humble themselves will they find true wisdom and truth in God.

CHAPTER 28

The Powerful, Meek, and Lowly Savior

One definition of meekness is “restrained power.” Jesus demonstrated this in the extreme. On the cross hung the Creator of the universe with all the power and ability to make the pain, suffering, and shame go away with one thought, and yet He bore the cross in silence. He restrained His mighty power so that we might be saved by His blood sacrifice once and for all. At one point Validus makes this point when he says, “These puny men had no idea with whom they were dealing. At this very moment the particles of creation by which they existed were being held together by His loving hand, and they were about to deliver Him to Apollyon, the destroyer.” Colossians gives us this depiction of the power of Jesus Christ.

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist [are held together]. (Colossians 1:16–17)

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

The rest of the bold text refers to the following Bible passages:

Hades: Matthew 8:11–12; Mark 9:43–48

Peter drawing his sword: Matthew 26:51; Luke 22:50; John 18:10

Jesus healing the guard's ear: Matthew 26:52; Luke 22:51

The power of darkness: Luke 22:52–53

Peter tempting Jesus not to go to the cross: Mark 8:32–33

CHAPTER 29

God's Heart Toward Children

At the end of this chapter, Validus and Ral are reminded that Tren is a guardian angel charged to watch over children. It is clear in Scripture that children hold a special place in God's heart. We ought to take heed and value these little ones with just as much intensity.

Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Luke 18:15–17)

I can only imagine the response of a guardian angel whose charge has been harmed by the hands of an evil person. Jesus' warning is to be taken literally.

Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 18:10)

CHAPTER 30

The Mystery of the Indwelling

In this chapter, Danick and Brandt talk about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believers who are spreading out from Israel. The Bible tells us that this indwelling was a mystery that was hidden from the beginning of time. Not

even Satan could have imagined such a thing. It is through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God that men and women have the courage to spread the gospel of Christ across the globe in spite of the efforts of the Enemy. What a marvelous work of God!

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:2–4)

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:25–27)

CHAPTER 31

Laying Down Your Life for Another

Ral gives his life to save Drew. Jesus said that this was the ultimate form of love.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:12–13)

And Jesus fulfilled this great love just a short time later when He laid down His life for each of us.

CHAPTER 32

The Lineage of Jesus Christ

Danick has spent his entire assignment protecting the lineage of Christ but finally acquiesces to Brandt in regard to changing strategies. It is now time to

protect the saints who are spreading out to the corners of the earth. Lineages in the Jewish culture are extremely important. Matthew 1 tracks the lineage of Jesus through Mary back to Abraham. Luke 3 tracks the lineage of Jesus through Joseph back to Adam and Eve. These lineages are important because God's curse on the serpent, Satan, in Genesis 3:15 was that the seed of Eve would "bruise your head." The lineage of Jesus is a direct link to the fulfillment of God's first hint at a Savior way back in Genesis.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)

CHAPTER 33

Angel of the Church

Teriel is angry because violence has come to the church he is charged to protect. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Jesus commands John to write seven letters to the seven churches. Each of these letters is addressed, "To the angel of the church in . . ." There is much speculation about what the word *angel* refers to in this passage. Theologians' opinions range from the word referring to the church's primary pastor, to the church itself, and also to literal angels. *Rise of the Fallen* simply entertains the notion and possibility that *angel* may refer to a literal watch-guard angel over each of God's churches.

To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, "These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands." (Revelation 2:1)

Angel Intervention

Drew Carter pleads with Validus to help him escape from the FBI so he can save Sydney and the Branson children. Validus intervenes by freeing Drew from the handcuffs around his wrists. Although this may seem far-fetched, there are no less dramatic examples in the Bible of angels intervening on behalf of people in peril.

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. (Acts 12:5–7)

CHAPTER 34

Persecution of the Jewish People

This chapter deals with the horror of the Holocaust, but the Jewish people have been intensely persecuted throughout history, not just during the Holocaust. Great persecution of the nation of Israel began in AD 70 when Titus and his Roman army utterly destroyed Jerusalem. The dispersion of the Jewish people (the Diaspora) and their persecution have continued ever since. Today we are seeing a resurgence of anti-Semitism. According to the Bible, the Jewish people will continue to be persecuted until they accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah near the End of Days. As Jesus went to the cross, He warned the people of the difficult days ahead.

And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'" (Luke 23:27–30)

Throughout Scripture, prophets and apostles plead for the nation of Israel to come to salvation through Christ. We ought to add our prayers for the same.

Dealing with Grief

Validus is grieved to the heart when Danick is dissolved. Any time we lose a loved one, grief is an emotion we must deal with. It is part of living in a fallen world. God knows our pain and our afflictions, and He is able to comfort us in our time of deepest grief.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:2–4)

CHAPTER 35

Valiant Leadership

Validus leads his men into Durgank's stronghold, a place of great peril. Excellent leadership is paramount to being victorious in a battle. Great leaders must have many qualities in their lives to be effective: integrity, vision, selflessness, confidence, humility, and effective communication skills to name a few. However, the true test of great leaders is whether their people are willing to follow them into battle or, at the very least, through difficult times. There are seminars, training centers, books, and a whole plethora of resources to help develop leadership skills, but in reality, the perfect example for us all is that of Jesus Christ. Every single quality required to be an excellent leader is perfectly modeled in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And in the end, His followers went to the ends of the earth and laid down their lives in service to Him. Here are a few verses that demonstrate the fundamental qualities of leadership in Jesus.

The integrity of Jesus: Hebrews 4:15

The vision of Jesus: Luke 19:10

The selflessness of Jesus: John 10:15

The confidence of Jesus: Matthew 7:29

The humility of Jesus: Philippians 2:8

The communication skills of Jesus: Matthew 5

CHAPTER 36

The Nation of Israel Reborn

In spite of nearly two thousand years of persecution and global dispersion, on May 14, 1948, Israel became a nation once more. On the same day of their declaration as a sovereign state, they were attacked by multiple Arab countries and yet were victorious. This biblically prophetic event was prophesied in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Zechariah and is a dramatic sign that the End of Days may be near.

It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:11–12)

It is hard to say what the role of the United States of America will have in the End of Days, but there is a symbolic reference in Revelation regarding the nation of Israel as the days become difficult for them. Perhaps the “wings of a great eagle” are the United States.

But 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. (Revelation 12:14)

CHAPTER 37

Courage and Mercy Found in Unlikely Places

Validus marvels at the courage and the mercy demonstrated by the boys in the favela. God sees that potential in all of us, but potential and action are two completely different things. What turns potential into action is choice. We must choose to allow God to transform our potential into active, vibrant, faithful action. James tells us not to be hearers only but doers also. That happens with a decision . . . our decision.

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:25)

CHAPTER 38

When Good Men and Women Fail

Validus fears that he has disobeyed God and failed Him. Although angels are sinless, this scene depicts the appropriate response of a person who has failed in his or her walk with the Lord—repentance. A genuine understanding of our frailty and sinfulness is the beginning of greatness. Even Daniel, whom Gabriel says is “greatly beloved,” prays a prayer of intense repentance and includes himself.

And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said,
“O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.” (Daniel 9:4–5)

From Genesis to Revelation the message to man is clear: repent! Then and only then can God work mighty deeds in the earth.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.
(James 4:10)