

## ***Discussion Guide for The Mark***

### **Just-for-Fun Facts**

- 1) When David Hassid arrives at Medical Services trying to locate Annie, what does the doctor tell him about what had happened in sector 53?
- 2) What is the name of the commander at Carpathia Memorial, GC air base? Why does the officer suggest that the name will have to be changed yet again? What was the original name of the base?
- 3) When Rayford and Albie drive from the airport over to the bunker, what is the name of Pinkerton Stephens's assistant at the desk as they enter the Pueblo bunker to free Hattie? Who is Pinkerton Stephens?
- 4) What is a loyalty enforcement facilitator?
- 5) Why is Nicolae upset that James Hickman had already begun the process of locating a huge pig for him to use in Jerusalem? Who pays the price for this faux pas?
- 6) What is the name of David Hassid's assistant?

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Prayer**

- 7) At the beginning of chapter 2, Rayford is tired and stressed out. As he is flying the chopper from the Strong Building safe house to the airport in Kankakee to rendezvous with Albie he can't find his phone, so he remembers his friend's opposite trigger mode. Have you used similar strategies to give the Holy Spirit a chance to redirect your emotional responses to temptation? What do you do when you are tempted to angrily blame God for your problems?
- 8) In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 the apostle Paul enjoins believers to pray without ceasing. In chapter 5, after David Hassid gets his telephone back from Hannah Palemoon and learns that she is a fellow believer, he is hurrying over to the potentate's office for a meeting. En route he breathed a prayer for Annie, thanks for Nurse Palemoon, for Tsion who had taught him . . . How has

praying ceaselessly worked out in your life? What are some ways you could begin to practice such discipline? Recall some times when it would have been a good idea to be in constant prayer and share them with the group.

### **Boldness**

- 9) In his teaching (see chapter 9), Tsion tells his readers that if they refuse the mark of the beast, they will be beheaded. He goes on to say that we worry whether at that hour we will be found lacking courage, loyalty, and faithfulness. Then he reassures his readers that the God who calls them to the ultimate sacrifice will also give them the power to endure it. How do you feel when you think about getting killed in this way as a martyr? Do you look to your own resources of courage and loyalty, or do you look to God to supply what you will need in that hour?
- 10) Tsion attempts to teach and encourage Chaim, to prepare him for a task for which Tsion believes God has chosen Chaim. Perhaps Chaim is emotionally and physically drained from the plane crash that almost took his life. Whatever the cause, Tsion points out in chapter 14 that Chaim is only mumbling what are actually awesome truths like: He is risen indeed! Amen! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! He tries to encourage him and challenge him, You could go to Jerusalem, a leader of men, a conqueror! Share with the group times when you have been discouraged or lacked faith to step up boldly to a task for which the Lord had chosen you. Describe ways in which you can identify with Chaim's feelings that he is unworthy, afraid, unqualified, and unprepared.
- 11) In chapter 17, Albie and Buck are at the adult women's lockup at the detention center in Ptolemais, Greece, when the GC begins to make prisoners take the mark of loyalty. When Mrs. Miklos and Pastor Demeter's wife refuse to stop praying and pay attention, they are severely beaten. Then the GC leader tells all the women they must decide right now if they would rather suffer the guillotine instead of receiving the mark of loyalty. Somehow these two courageous women raise their hands to indicate they would rather have their heads chopped off than receive the mark of loyalty to the Antichrist. Then other women begin to raise their hands and marks of the believer appear. What role do you think Mrs. Miklos's prayers played in enabling her to face martyrdom? What kinds of things does this bold witness remind you of that you have experienced or heard about?

## **Sharing Faith**

- 12) After Rayford and Albie left Colorado with Hattie, Albie shares his testimony with her. While Albie speaks to her, Rayford is praying though he must have felt like Peter when Jesus asked him to put the net into the sea again after fishing all night without results. Thinking about this scene from chapter 7, what is the role of prayer support in evangelism? Recall times when you were either one sharing the good news or one praying for others as they reached out to unbelievers.
- 13) Pastor Demeter's gift is evangelism. In chapter 18, when Buck locates him in the building where the men are kept, Pastor Demeter is working quickly to assist each of the men to make a decision for Christ, right then and there. Those refusing the Antichrist's mark of loyalty face the guillotine. But even at that moment the Holy Spirit is bestowing gifts of faith and courage on those who truly seek it. Like the thief on the cross, one of the new believers shouts out for others to follow his lead, "It's true! God loves you!" Describe times you have seen the power of the Holy Spirit come over a crowd and draw people to Christ. What fears did you have to overcome when you accepted Jesus as your Savior?
- 14) In chapter 6, Albie and Buck are in Colorado trying to steal Hattie from a GC bunker about an hour south of Colorado Springs, and they have a very strange encounter with a badly disfigured and disabled GC functionary named Pinkerton Stephens. He is actually Buck's old boss and friend, Steve Plank. Steve had become a believer by reading the material Buck was writing and when the predicted earthquake came, he was praying for salvation at the first rumble. Do you know of people who were saved because of work that someone did a long time ago and the person responsible for planting the seed of God in this other person, watering it, and caring for it never knew that his or her prayers had been answered?

## **Prophecy**

- 15) In chapter 9, Buck awoke at dawn and made the rounds. After a few moments conversation with Tsion, Buck begins reading Tsion's next daily teaching message wherein Tsion reveals that the key to understanding the predictive prophecies in the Bible is to take the words as literally as he takes any others from the Bible, unless the context and the wording itself indicated otherwise. Can you identify prophecies that have already been fulfilled? How does this encourage you as you read the prophecies in the Bible?

- 16) In chapter 19, Rayford is reading Tsion Ben-Judah's daily cybermessage. At one point Tsion quotes Revelation 14: 9-11. Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Tsion's comment on that Scripture verse is, You don't have to be a Bible scholar to understand that. What do you remember feeling the first time you ever heard that prophecy? How are you moved to pray when you think about an unsaved loved one or a friend who might be inclined to take the mark and worship the image of the Antichrist?
- 17) In chapter 19, Tsion's prophetic message to the tribulation saints discusses the difference between the book of God the Father and the Book of Life of the Lamb. If one dies without trusting Christ for salvation, his name is blotted out, because he is no longer among the living. But those who have trusted Christ have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life, so that when they die physically, they remain alive spiritually and are never blotted out. Can you express how you feel when you ponder this comforting and powerful prophecy? Recall a time in your life, if you can, when you took for granted that God would save everybody.

### **Fellowship**

- 18) Toward the end of chapter 2, Rayford is flying with Albie to check out the old safe house in Mount Prospect, and they are discussing the need for Rayford to be more decisive. Have you ever been in a leadership position when you felt others in the group could handle the responsibility more effectively? Did you learn to rely on their support as a gift from God to help you make better decisions and to be a better leader?
- 19) In chapter 10, as Rayford, Albie, and Hattie are in the chopper headed for the safe house in Chicago, Hattie is worrying about all the apologies she owes everyone for her actions as an unbeliever. Rayford acknowledges that on his own he would not be able to forgive Hattie, but with God's help he can. What kinds of sins have you forgiven for the sake of fellowship within the body of Christ? What kinds of idiosyncrasies have some new believers exhibited that required much patience and love on your part?

### **God's Sovereignty**

- 20) In chapter 8, David Hassid expresses doubt about being able to continue in his crucial role if his fiancée, Annie, has perished. It turns out that she was, indeed, hideously slaughtered by Leon Fortunato's lightning weapon. When David learns about her death he is terribly grieved. How would you handle David's grief and dismay if you were Mac or Hannah? What kinds of devastating disappointments have you experienced or heard about from others? How do tragedies test our belief that God really loves us?
- 21) In chapter 9, in the morning as Buck and Tsion are praying for Hattie's salvation, she has already accepted Jesus as her Savior and Lord the night before. There are times when we pray and God has already answered our prayer with a yes, and there are times when we pray and God has already answered with a no. In light of this, how can we pray believing that God hears our prayers and changes things? Share with each other how God's sovereignty gives peace that passes understanding.

## **Answer Key for *The Mark* Just-for-Fun Facts**

- 1) That there had been lots of lightning victims there. A big bolt of lightning had hit in sector 53. (see p. 22)
- 2) Judy Hamilton (see p. 55); Memorial has to be left out of the new name because Carpathia is thought to have risen from the dead. (see p. 36); Peterson Air Force Base (see p. 35)
- 3) Mrs. Garner (see p. 100); Steve Plank (see p. 93)
- 4) guillotines (see p. 170)
- 5) Because Hickman could only know about Nicolae's need for a pig if confidential material had been leaked from a meeting in his office. (see p. 249); Ramon Santiago (see p. 250)
- 6) Tiffany (see p. 230)