

Discussion Guide for Nicolae

Just-for-Fun Facts

- 1) At the onset of World War III, at which airport did Nicolae have his pilot land to pick up Rayford so they could all go to Dallas together?
- 2) What color is the new Range Rover Buck buys?
- 3) What was Nicolae discussing with Amanda White on the flight from Glenview Naval Air Station to Dallas?
- 4) Buck just had a birthday. How old is he at this point in the story?
- 5) About how many kilometers is the trip in the motor launch up the Jordan River from near Jericho to where Tsion Ben-Judah is hiding?
- 6) How does Buck characterize the stop earlier in Beersheba when he is being questioned at the Israeli-Sinai border by the guard?
- 7) How does Tsion escape capture while he and Buck are questioned and searched at the border crossing?

Discussion Questions

Prayer

- 8) Buck has come to the end of his own resources as he heads up the Jordan River in Michael's motor launch. He earnestly prays for direction, even asking in his desperation for God to speak out loud concerning what Buck should do (p. 190). In the moment that follows, Michael points a high-powered weapon at Buck's head. Discuss with each other the times in your life when God's answers to your most desperate prayers initially seemed to be the opposite of your hopes and expectations.
- 9) On p. 213, Buck tells Tsion very frankly that he needs to get him away from the lake hideout and that he has no idea how to do it. Tsion asks him if he has prayed, and Buck says that he has been praying constantly. When you pray for things that seem impossible, how do you feel? Share several examples of God's answers to impossible requests.

Boldness

- 10) At the beginning of chapter 7, while Ken Ritz is topping off the Learjet before the flight to Tel Aviv, Buck finds the confidence to tell Ken his own story of conversion. As we go through the events of our daily lives, sometimes we find it most difficult to share the gospel with unbelievers to whom we are closest or upon whom we depend for important needs. When he was through, Buck was surprised at his friend's openness. What are some experiences you've had along these lines?
- 11) Buck is paralyzed by fear. He must get Tsion to Egypt, but he is reluctant to try. Tsion begins to pray (p. 216) and immediately Buck is humbled and emboldened. How does humility go with boldness? Share your experiences in regard to this paradoxical truth.
- 12) Piloting Nicolae's flight from Baghdad to Rome, Rayford finds out for certain that Nicolae is aware of the relationship between Buck and Rayford (p. 367). Rayford continues to serve as Nicolae's pilot for the sake of the information he is acquiring from the secret intercom. This boldness repeatedly provides the Trib Force with highly valuable reconnaissance. How can we learn to walk in faith and boldness to do the good works prepared for us? (See Ephesians 2:10.)

Sharing Faith

- 13) Rayford laments to himself on p. 298 that maybe he had counted too much on his own personality and style and not enough on God himself to work in Hattie's heart during their abortion discussion. What are some approaches that you have taken to maximize your dependence on God and minimize the temptation to succeed under your own power when sharing the gospel with unbelievers?
- 14) At Rayford's insistence, Hattie stops in at Loretta's house. Amanda, Chloe, and Buck are all there to share their faith with her (p. 375). Hattie isn't open to any preaching or gospel presentations; all they can do is make sure she knows they love her unconditionally. Keeping in mind the example of Bruce Barnes mentioned on pp. 316 and 317, share some of the ways you've seen love speak to the hearts of unbelievers when words did not reach them.

Prophecy

- 15) As the story begins (see the end of the Prologue), the Red Horse of the Apocalypse is on the rampage. Discuss some of the ways you could help

unbelievers you know to ponder the fulfillment of prophecies like Revelation 6:3-4.

- 16) The fulfillment of Revelation 6:9-11 is, as Rayford points out on p. 324, life-and-death stuff. None of us can predict how we would react to a situation where we might die specifically for preaching the gospel, but even now we can begin to die to ourselves. Paul tells us in Romans 12 to give our bodies to God, to let them be a holy sacrifice. Nonetheless, in the press of our daily lives, perhaps it seems remote and improbable that we would ever be under the altar in heaven. How should we think about prophecies like these? What are some small decisions that you can make today that would put you on a path to this kind of obedience?
- 17) First Bruce Barnes and then Rayford faithfully preach the fulfillment of the seven Seal Judgments. Why is it important for believers to know and believe these prophecies? How did both Buck and Rayford's careful study of Revelation 6:12-17 prepare them for the action they needed to take the second they noticed the wrath of the Lamb earthquake beginning (pp. 401—402)?

Fellowship

- 18) Ever since Buck and Tsion visited the two witnesses at the Wailing Wall (in *Tribulation Force*) they began a special friendship in the Lord. In *Nicolae*, throughout chapters 11 and 12, Buck's mission to bring Tsion to America further cements their camaraderie. These special gifts of fellowship are powerful and encouraging. Tell the group about special brothers and sisters you've met along the way in your Christian pilgrimage.
- 19) At the memorial service for Bruce Barnes, the congregation finds strength in worshiping together and remembering the gifts Bruce shared with them all. Sitting next to Lorreta after her eulogy (pp. 316—317) is Tsion Ben-Judah. He gently puts his arm around her as she quietly weeps. The fellowship Christians have with each other transcends anything the unbelieving world can offer. Describe how you have experienced the joy and comfort of Christian fellowship even in the midst of grief and disappointment.

God's Sovereignty

- 20) Understandably, the death of Bruce Barnes hits the new believers at New Hope Village Church very hard (pp. 310—311). When God takes home those whom he has used to bring us to faith, we can hardly imagine how we will go on. How do these transitions help each of us to trust our heavenly Father more?

- 21) At the very beginning of *Nicolae*, uniformed Global Community guards flag down Rayford as he is driving a rental car over to the church just after finding out about the death of Bruce Barnes. He and his wife are coptered to Glenview Naval Air Station. Though it isn't where Rayford wanted to go, being rushed to Dallas was the first in a list of important appointments God had for Rayford. If he hadn't been there to meet with Earl Halliday, he would not have known about the eavesdropping system. Share examples with one another about how God put you somewhere you didn't want to be in order to fulfill his perfect will.
- 22) At the very end of chapter 6, Rayford is struggling in prayer to understand the Lord's purposes in placing him in the service of Nicolae Carpathia. He wonders if the Lord couldn't use him to more actively oppose the Antichrist. He quickly concludes that the only course for him is obedience and acceptance. After briefly remembering his loved ones, Rayford begins to thank the Lord for all he has done in his life. How does gratitude help center you when you're feeling useless?

Answer Key for *Nicolae* Just-for-Fun Facts

- 1) They meet at Glenview Naval Air Station near Chicago. (see p. 7)
- 2) It is an earth-toned colored vehicle. (see p. 24)
- 3) He wanted to know what she wanted to eat. (see p. 38)
- 4) Buck is thirty-two years old. (see p. 187)
- 5) It is more than a hundred kilometers. (see p. 190)
- 6) He complains that the word *detained* is overstating it. He says that he was briefly questioned while he was adding water to the radiator. (see p. 247)
- 7) A guard named Anis lets Tsion go when Tsion tells him his name. (see p. 255)