

"Angels and demons clash in an epic story laden with spiritual warfare. I loved this book."

—HEATHER BURCH,
author of the Halflings series

CLOAK OF THE LIGHT



CHUCK BLACK

READERS GUIDE

CHAPTER 1

The Sting of Death

Young Drew Carter and his mother experience the pain of losing his father. In 1 Corinthians 15:56, the Bible says that death has a sting, and anyone who has lived through the death of a loved one knows it to be true. But God promises for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ that there is coming a day when death will no longer be able to sting. That happens on the day of resurrection.

“Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:54–58)

Thankfully, those who have a relationship with Christ can look forward to a new body—immortal and not subject to the afflictions of this world. Death itself will be eliminated forever.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 21:4)

A Father to the Fatherless

Although Jake may not be a Christian, he demonstrates a biblical principle by “visit[ing] the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27, κϒ). As a child of God, He promises that He will take care of you. If He has to move a stranger’s heart to help you, He will. Whether or not you have a loving father on this earth, you are not fatherless.

A father of the fatherless...is God in His holy habitation. (Psalm 68:5)

CHAPTER 2

Least of These

Just as Drew defended Benjamin in the cafeteria, we also should follow Jesus’ calling to show kindness and respect to those whom society has deemed “the least.”

Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these... (Matthew 25:40)

Sometimes it takes courage and the willingness to step outside our comfort zone to be kind to “the least of these,” but Jesus commands and rewards such action.

Peer Pressure

Drew faced peer pressure by the “cool” athletes to mistreat Benjamin Berg, the school nerd. We all want to be loved and accepted, and it’s easy to mistake the high and the rush of giving in to peer pressure for acceptance and love. But it’s a false substitute. The only thing that will make you feel loved is actually being loved. Love comes from family, true friends, and most importantly, from Jesus Christ. When you face peer pressure, take a step back and look at it clearly. What are you hoping to get from the experience? A rush? Acceptance? Will it deliver what you think it promises? And if it doesn’t deliver, how will you feel when it’s all over?

For all that is in the world...is not of the Father but is of the world.

(1 John 2:16)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. (Romans 12:2)

The key to overcoming peer pressure is to remember that the Enemy often uses peer pressure to deceive, manipulate, and tempt us to commit sin. Remember that God’s ways are always better and that He truly is faithful in seeing us through the temptation and wants to lavish us with reward and blessing when we are faithful to Him.

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship.

(1 Corinthians 1:9)

Wrong to Do Nothing

Drew tells Ben: “It’s wrong to do nothing when you have the power to do something.” Drew received this from his father and does not realize it is a biblical principle found in James.

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it...it is sin. (James 4:17)

We who have the truth are without excuse when it comes to doing good unto others.

CHAPTER 3

Man's Fascination with Alien Life

The number of books and movies about alien life is growing exponentially. Our culture seems nearly obsessed with the concept. With this much attention and resources dedicated to an industry that has the ability to shape the thought processes of its viewers and readers, a diligent Christian ought to ponder the question, Is there something more to the promotion of alien life than just entertainment or even distraction from God? Could it be that the Enemy of God and the Enemy of God's people is preparing the world for something? The Bible calls for us to be wary and watchful.

Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion.
(1 Peter 5:8)

Finally, remember that the stars in heaven were created for one purpose:

The heavens declare the glory of God. (Psalm 19:1)

CHAPTER 4

The Foolishness of the Wise

When speaking of Sydney, Ben makes the statement: "Religion is a crutch for the weak-minded and needy of the world." Satan has used this delusion to support the worldly notions of self-sufficiency and egotism. You may have heard the saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Man seems to have the innate sense to cry out to God for help in his hour of need but just as quickly forgets about his need for a Savior when life is going smoothly. The Bible calls this foolishness.

Professing to be wise, they became fools. (Romans 1:22)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10)

CHAPTER 5

Real Friends

After the accident, when Drew felt as if everyone was against him, Ben stuck by his side. The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of encouragement and counsel from true friends.

But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

A friend loves at all times. (Proverbs 17:17)

Real friends are not afraid to say the hard thing.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. (Proverbs 27:6)

God Cares

Because of his circumstances, Drew believes that God doesn't care about him. Even though life sometimes feels hard or unfair, it is important to remind yourself daily that God loves you. You are important to Him.

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.
(Luke 19:10)

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
(Hebrews 13:5)

CHAPTER 6

Light of the World

Drew encounters Sydney at college and realizes that there is something different about her that he can't describe. What Drew is drawn to is Christ in her and

the light that shines from her because of the Holy Spirit. Even though she hasn't specifically spoken of her faith to him, her behavior and words testify loudly. At some point, we must use words to present the gospel, but until the Lord presents that opportunity, the light of our lives should proclaim Him just as clearly.

Let your light so shine before men. (Matthew 5:16)

CHAPTER 7

Witnessing to an Atheist

Sydney invites Drew to a Bible study, where he must face some of the flaws in his own belief system. There are a number of different approaches to take when witnessing to an atheist, but the first question that must be asked is, does he or she have an interest in discovering the truth? The answer to this question determines the approach. People who are antagonistic toward the Bible and Christianity will not usually listen to sound arguments no matter how scientific or factual they may be. Usually it is the demonstration of love and compassion that has an impact on them.

The goodness of God leads you to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

For a person who is an atheist and yet is open to the truth, an apologetics approach is often best. Apologetics is the branch of theology concerned with the defense and rational justification of Christianity. In Drew's case, because of his father's commitment to defending the freedoms of America, the Holy Spirit led Devin to start there. Another effective approach is to start with Creation and the concept of an intelligent designer.

His invisible attributes are clearly seen. (Romans 1:20)

Using Creation as evidence of a creator leads to a logical and systematic progression toward the gospel of Jesus Christ and ultimately salvation: Creation...existence of God...sin...need for the law...need for a Savior. The book of Romans is an excellent place to take a questioning atheist.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Romans 3:10)

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9–10)

Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Irreconcilable Beliefs

Drew discovers just how important and real Sydney’s faith is to her. Sydney takes a difficult but uncompromising stand in obeying God’s Word and in protecting her heart.

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Love is a powerful emotion and can cause people to make unwise decisions that have lifelong consequences. Only a disciplined and obedient mind brought under the truth of God’s Word can keep one from making foolish decisions dictated by emotion.

CHAPTER 8

Dealing with Fear

Ben is struggling with intense fear because of what he has discovered about the invaders. The Bible says that fear does not come from the Lord; however, there

are two kinds of fear: the healthy respectful fear that we should have for God, and the controlling incapacitating fear that comes from Satan.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10)

It may seem ironic, but the more we fear the Lord, the less we fear the world and the Enemy, and the more courageous and valiant we become.

CHAPTER 9

Alternate Dimensions

When Ben and Drew discover that Dr. Waseem's experiment works, Drew gets a glimpse into a whole new dimension. The concept of alternate dimensions is not new. Physicists have theorized about such realities for many years, and it has been a favorite theme of science fiction since its inception. But actually, God told us about His "alternate dimension" from the beginning: the spiritual world. Ecclesiastes is correct when the preacher states that "there is nothing new under the sun." John 3:6 clearly identifies and separates the two realities: that of the physical world, or "the flesh," and that of the spiritual world. It is interesting to note that secular scientists and physicists don't give the spiritual world as described in the Bible any credence but would rather invent their own. It parallels their resistance to accept the truth of Creation versus that of the big bang theory.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

CHAPTER 10

Hope in Tragedy

Drew experienced tragedy when his eyesight was lost in the lab accident. Because we live in a fallen world, we are susceptible to tragedy. Jesus warned us

that we would face trials in this life, but He has given us all the tools necessary to overcome them and be victorious in spite of them.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD.
(Jeremiah 29:11)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.
(John 16:33)

CHAPTER 11

Angel Weapons

Drew and Ben discuss the weapons of the invaders. The Bible states that, at the very least, some angels carry swords. Evidence for this is found in the following verses.

He placed... a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way.
(Genesis 3:24)

He saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword. (Numbers 22:31)

David... saw the angel of the LORD..., having in his hand a drawn sword stretched. (1 Chronicles 21:16)

CHAPTER 12

The Spiritual Realm

Drew can see into the “alternate” dimension. The Bible also tells of men who have seen into the spiritual realm and tried to describe it.

The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. (Ezekiel 1:1)

Daniel records several glimpses into the spiritual realm.

I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning. (Daniel 8:15–17)

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision. (Daniel 10:5–9)

Elisha's servant saw the army of God.

The LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15–17)

John had a vision of things to come which he describes in the entire book of Revelation.

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. (Revelation 4:1–2)

The spiritual world is more real than our physical world, for it is eternal. Jesus came from heaven to testify of its reality and to show us the way home: heaven.

CHAPTER 13

Betrayal

Drew felt betrayed by Jake and his mother when they arranged for him to meet Dr. Fisher. Betrayal hurts worst when it is done by someone you love. Jesus felt the sting of betrayal too when Judas, one of his closest friends, gave him over to the chief priests to be crucified.

From that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. (Matthew 26:14–16)

Jesus understands every hurt we feel and every temptation we have endured. He is a Savior whom we can turn to even when we feel betrayed.

We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize. (Hebrews 4:15)

CHAPTER 14

Spiritual Warfare

Drew begins to understand that there are two factions of invaders that are at war. Although the Bible doesn't give us a lot of details about what spiritual

warfare looks like, it is referenced from Genesis to Revelation. The war began when Satan (Lucifer) became prideful and rebelled against God.

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! (Isaiah 14:12–14)

Many theologians believe that the reference in Revelation 12:4 refers to Lucifer convincing a third of the angels to follow him in his rebellion against God.

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven. (Revelation 12:3–4)

Satan and his demons seek to destroy all people.

Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion. (1 Peter 5:8)

As children of God, we are called into the battle as well.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. (Ephesians 6:10–13)

The Bible is silent on many aspects of spiritual beings and spiritual warfare. For example:

- What might their weapons be?
- Where would demons get weapons if they have them?
- In any war there is a risk of loss. What might be the risk of loss for angelic beings?
- Do angels and demons feel pain?
- Can they be injured?
- Can an angel lose a fight with a demon?

Whatever the answers are to these questions, it is important to know that God has already determined the end of the war. God is victorious, and we will rejoice on that day.

The devil...was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. (Revelation 20:10)

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Revelation 21:3–4)

CHAPTERS 15–16*The Attack of the Enemy*

Drew experiences an attack by a dark invader. It is difficult to say just how vulnerable man is to the attacks of demons, but it appears to range from simply causing distress to taking life. Two biblical examples give us a glimpse into the capabilities of these fallen angels. The first is found in Job 1, when God allows Satan access to Job's family and possessions. All is destroyed, including his sons and daughters. A second example relates to Paul and the attacks of Satan.

A thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

It is important to note that every spiritual attack described in the Bible is subject to the sovereignty of God.

He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations. (Psalm 66:7)

CHAPTERS 17–18*Being a Good Samaritan*

Because of his developing abilities, Drew feels compelled to help other people. But we don't need special abilities to help someone in need. Jesus tells a story of a man who helped another who was robbed and beaten. He uses the story of the good Samaritan as a teaching point for us all. Jesus also states that the greatest love a person can demonstrate toward another is by laying his life down for him. This was a foreshadowing of Jesus' great love for us by dying on the cross for our sins.

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life. (John 15:12–13)

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

CHAPTER 19

Enemy of Truth

Drew sees a targeted attack by the dark invaders on the ministry team at Reverend Branson's church. The purpose of demonic attack is to hinder the work of God and the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Satan and his demons are the enemy of truth, but we should not be discouraged by his attacks because God is with us.

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed. (2 Corinthians 4:1–9)

CHAPTER 20

Beasts of the Bible

Drew witnesses the attack of a fearsome beast against the light invaders protecting the church. The Bible contains much symbolism, so it is difficult to make a determination as to whether there is a biblical basis for the existence of such beasts in the spiritual world. However, John declares in the book of Revelation that he was taken up to the third heaven, God's abode, and he describes exactly what he sees. The beast Drew sees is pure speculation, but it is not outside the realm of spiritual possibility when considering the vivid descriptions of the apostle John.

Out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.... The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. (Revelation 9:1–11)

CHAPTER 21

When Bad Things Happen

Sydney tries to help Drew understand a little about God's character and sovereignty, but Drew has a hard time believing her because bad things happen to good people. Drew's logic is flawed because he doesn't understand that there is

evil in the world and sin has changed the nature of mankind and the nature of all of creation.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors. (Romans 8:22)

Despite all the pain and suffering people experience in this world because of sin, God has a promise for His children. It is a promise that comes from the almighty God who is sovereign in everything.

And we know that all things work together for good. (Romans 8:28)

CHAPTER 22

God's Call

Sydney tells Drew that she is obeying God's call on her life. Sometimes God calls us to do things that don't make sense because we don't see the whole picture. Hearing God's call is the first step. Taking action and following is the next and potentially most frightening. If we want to be vessels through which God can work, we must be willing to say yes and then step out in faith.

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send...?"
(Isaiah 6:8)

CHAPTER 23

The Attack of the Enemy

Drew witnesses an attack on Ben by the dark invaders. See chapters 15 and 16 for further explanation.

CHAPTERS 24–25

Help from Above

Drew and Ben are given help by a mysterious cab driver. Angels do interfere in the affairs of mankind in such ways. Two such biblical examples are Peter

receiving help from an angel to escape prison, and two angels helping Lot and his family escape the destruction of Sodom.

Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone. (Acts 12:5–10)

The angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife.” (Genesis 19:15–17)

The Secret War

Drew and Ben speculate that mankind subconsciously knows about the secret war between the invaders. Although they haven’t yet discovered the truth about who the invaders really are, they are right about this deduction. The theme of good versus evil is central to almost every story told from the beginning of time. That element of story is a shadowy indicator of the truth of the real epic, invisible battle taking place all around us right now. People are so completely drenched by the concept of good battling evil in all of our legends, books, and movies that many do not even realize or consider that its origin lies in the truth of spiritual warfare.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. (Ephesians 6:12)

CHAPTER 26

Risk of Loss

Drew witnesses the death of an invader. What does spiritual warfare really look like? According to Daniel 10:20, angels do fight with demons. Whenever there is a battle or a war, there is risk of loss for both sides. If this fighting has been going on for thousands of years and a demon has never won a fight, why would they ever try. I think it is fairly safe to speculate that demons have won some fights over the millennia. What happens to an angel when a demon wins the fight is sheer speculation. On this subject the Bible is silent. However, we do know that a defeated demon can be sent to the abyss.

They begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. (Luke 8:27–33)

This is a dramatic example of the power of Jesus over the forces of darkness. Even a legion of demons feared him and knew they had no power over him. A typical legion in the Roman army of the day was approximately 5,400 soldiers. From this example, “the abyss” indicates a place of imprisonment and may refer to the bottomless pit referred to in Revelation. When Jesus does battle, He never loses!

CHAPTER 27

Deception

When Sydney discovers Drew and Ben’s true intentions, she feels deceived. Although Drew did not tell her for her own safety, she still feels betrayed by the deception. Even with the best intentions, deception is never healthy in a relationship. Drew should have told Sydney that there were things he could not tell her for her own safety and to trust him.

He who speaks truth declares righteousness. (Proverbs 12:17)

Good and Evil

As Reverend Ray witnesses to Drew, Drew comes to a dramatic conclusion that refutes secular science and evolution: good and evil exist, and they exist in both dimensions. He witnessed moral acts of good and evil in the physical world and in the spiritual world. Because of that, he struggles with the question, Where does morality, or good and evil, come from? It cannot come from evolution, reason, conscience, human nature, or utilitarianism. Because good and evil are universal, the moral laws that define good and evil must come from a moral commander. Drew was beginning to understand this and had to face the conclusion that his logic was driving toward. Believing in and appealing to morality requires one to believe in or appeal to that moral commander: God.

I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways.
(Deuteronomy 30:15–16)

CHAPTER 28

Morals and Ethics

Moral laws come from God, and although ethical laws can be derived from the laws of God, they are generated by man for the proper functioning of society. Sometimes people face a dilemma when moral laws come in conflict with ethical laws. Drew makes a difficult decision when he assaults the FBI agents near Reverend Ray's church. Although it was ethically wrong, in his mind it was morally right because lives were at stake. In essence, he was sacrificing himself for the lives of Sydney, Shana, and Micah because he knew it would be an act with dire consequences, possibly costing him his life. Those decisions are the hardest to make. If a man must break an ethical law to accomplish a moral law, he must be willing to accept the consequences. There is an excellent example of this in Joshua, when Rahab lied to the soldiers to protect the two Jewish spies (Joshua 2; 6), and also in Acts, when the High Priest commanded Peter and the apostles not to preach about Jesus.

But Peter...answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

CHAPTER 29

Demon Possession

Drew again encounters a "double-faced" man similar to the one he faced in chapter 14. We don't know what demon possession might look like in the spiritual world, only that it is real. Biblically, when a demon possess a person, he is controlled by the demon and may even possess certain unusual abilities. Mark 5:3–4 tells of a demon-possessed man having extra strength such that even chains and fetters could not bind him. Acts 16:16 tells of a woman possessed with a spirit of divination or the ability to predict future events. Today there

isn't much credence given to the possibility of demon possession, but it is quite certain that the demons have not gone away. Believers in Jesus Christ need have no fear of demon possession because they are filled with the Holy Spirit and the "room" of a person is filled so that it cannot be occupied by an evil spirit (see Matthew 12:43–45). Also, the Bible tells us that God is much greater than any evil spirit, including Satan.

He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

The Power of Prayer

Drew witnesses power being wielded against the dark invaders through Sydney, not realizing that it is God working through her prayers. How God uses prayer is a mystery, but Jesus affirms over and over that there is great power in prayer. See Matthew 17:21; Matthew 21:22; Acts 12:5; 1 Corinthians 7:5; Philippians 4:6; and James 5:16 for just a few examples.

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16)

CHAPTER 30

Angels

Drew learns that the name of the angel who has been helping him is Validus. The abilities and the limitations of angels are not clearly defined in Scripture, and there has been much speculation about them. There are a few things we do know about angels, however. For example:

- They have names (Lucifer—Isaiah 14:12; Michael—Jude v. 9; Gabriel—Daniel 9:21).
- They fight (Daniel 10:20).
- They have power to affect things in the physical world (Matthew 28:2; Luke 1:19–22; Revelation 7:2).
- They are not all powerful (Daniel 10:13).
- They are not all knowing (1 Peter 1:12).
- They carry weapons (Numbers 22:23; 1 Chronicles 21:16).

- They can appear to people (Genesis 19:1–3; Hebrews 13:2).
- They deliver God’s messages to people (Luke 1:19).
- They eat food (Genesis 19:3).
- At least some have wings (Ezekiel 11:22).
- They are holy (Acts 10:22).
- Children are protected by them (Matthew 18:10).
- At least some, if not all, stand in the presence of God (Luke 1:19).
- They carry the believing souls of people to heaven (Luke 16:22).

Beyond this, almost everything else about angels is speculation.