



The Order

Lynn Chase

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Lynn Chase's *The Order* is an ambitious and complex Christian thriller.

The plot involves the archangel Gabriel and numerous other members of "The Order," a group charged with protecting a young woman whose destiny is to be the mother of God's chosen commander during Armageddon, the coming and inevitable final battle with Satan. The Order jousts with Lucifer and his many minions, including Balthazar, to assure the safety of the young lady. They are aided in their mission by several mortals, some of whom can see the unearthly beings and some of whom cannot.

The narrative develops the characters in a realistic and engaging way, and in a nuanced manner reveals the ancient animosities that drive both the soldiers of God and the soldiers of Satan. Particularly well realized is the banter of the Fallen, which reeks of sour grapes. Despite their sneering rhetoric, they know they've chosen the wrong side and are ultimately doomed to fail.

The story includes a number of interesting, original details regarding the nature of both angels and demons. For example, in this version the angels have no wings; any semblance of wings is simply due to attachments to the armor they wear into battle. Likewise, their skills as warriors are not God-given but rather the result of thorough, intense marine-like training.

Of all the characters in the book, God himself is the least convincingly rendered. He appears several times throughout the story—appearances during which he shares extensive conversations with his loyal soldiers. In these conversations he comes across as jovial, unassuming, conversational, and relaxed—more of a coach than a stern and serious supreme commander. In this he seems something of an anomaly, given the grave nature of the doings at hand.

Sentence structure and grammar could be better. While conversations are phrased excellently, other slices of the prose—such as descriptions and interior monologues—are marred by run-on sentences, generally poor sentence structure, and grammatical errors.

The plotting works well overall, being anchored in a lucid, straightforward, generally chronological narrative that draws together numerous arcane details of the complex story and keeps them in sync. Backstories (mostly of angels and demons rather than humans) are cleverly contrived and at times quite extensive. As backstories should, they do much to flesh out the various characters while also setting into proper context the tale's contemporary action.

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EDWARD RENEHAN (June 12, 2017)

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