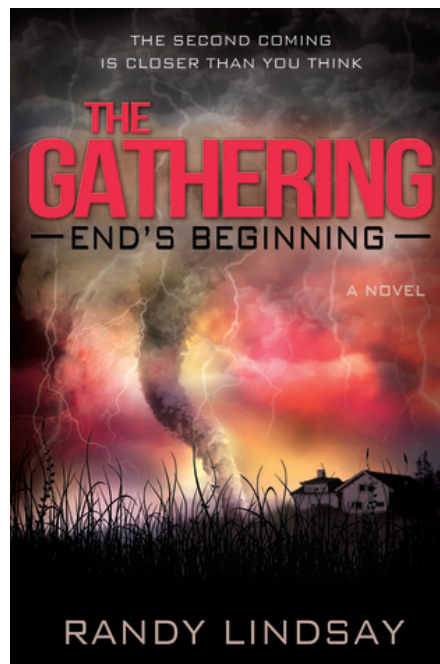




End's Beginning (The Gathering #1)

Randy Lindsay

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Robert Williams didn't expect an early honorable release from his mission, but upon his return home, he sees the reason for the surprise decision. Unemployment, rampant violence, and frequent food shortages have put the United States on the brink of another civil war. As the threads of society unravel, the Williams family must adapt to drastic changes as the long-foretold gathering begins to take place.

End's Beginning (The Gathering #1) Details

Date : Published January 14th 2014 by Cedar Fort Publishing & Media (first published January 7th 2014)

ISBN : 9781462113736

Author : Randy Lindsay

Format : Paperback 265 pages

Genre : Lds, Lds Fiction, Christianity, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic

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From Reader Review End's Beginning (The Gathering #1) for online ebook

Jan says

I ended up liking the concept of the novel more than the writing, itself. The characters are fine. A few of the mormonisms irritated me, and the book felt flat overall. I will probably read the sequel, though, to see if the plot holds my attention any better than this one did. The author has a great idea for a series and I hope he can capitalize on it! Let's hope there is more in book 2. More emotion. More depth. More surprises. More vocabulary. This would be better for teens than adults.

Stephanie says

The premise of this book - the "End of Times" - is a subject that greatly fascinates me and often drives the direction of my own creative diversions. One of my favorite research topics is the second coming of the Savior and the signs that will lead up to it. I am a preparation nut (not quite a fanatic, but with each year, each calamity, and each sign that comes to light, I'm edging closer!) For this reason, I was drawn to it, and couldn't wait to read it. And, I'm happy to report, I wasn't disappointed!

Political, social, and religious tension, all wrapped up in an easy-to-read, enjoyable, and quite thought-provoking novel. Lindsay cover's the perspectives of a few members of the Williams family (dad: John, mother: Becky, and their adult son Robert) as well as a Washington insider, Secretary of State Calvin McCord. I enjoyed all the different perspectives and the plot angles they presented.

This is a well-written, thought provoking, page-turner. I'd highly recommend it. Don't worry, you don't have to know much about the prophecies regarding the end of times to enjoy the story. (I do warn, however, that by the time you finish, you may find yourself wanting to know more.)

My only complaint is that it ended a bit abruptly. I kept looking for an extra page or two. Yes, I understand that it is the first in a series, but I still feel like it could've ended a little smoother.

Emmy says

What would you do if everything you had planned in life suddenly turned upside down.

Robert is serving an LDS mission in Italy when he is honorably released 6 months early but is not really told a reason why. He returns home and over time realizes that he was sent home as the country and the world is falling apart and he is needed at home. Bombings, terrorists attacks and natural disasters are increasing in frequency and the United States is on the brink of another civil war.

In the book of Revelations it talks of the disasters, wars and calamities that will happen before the second coming of the Jesus Christ. This book takes place at the brink of that time and Robert and his family are asked to sacrifice and prepare for this.

The book jumps between two different stories, one of Robert and his family and the other of the Calvin

McCord the Secretary of State who feels like the lone man fighting political lines and parties to try and stop an impending war. I kept waiting and wondering how these two stories were going to come together, and while they never did in this book it still feels like their story lines might cross in a future book.

The book flows quickly and I found it hard to put down, worrying for the characters and wondering what was going to happen next. As the Members of the LDS church take extra precautions to prepare; persecutions and prejudices increase against them.

This is the author's first novel and I felt like he did a great job writing a page-turning novel with great characters and intrigue. The book definitely leaves itself set up for a sequel, which I hope will soon follow as I am very curious to see what will happen next.

This is a clean-book, while PG-13 in theme and plot is free of language and sex. This is definitely written and geared towards and LDS audience. I am unsure how someone unfamiliar with the church's doctrines and beliefs would fully understand or appreciate this book but the suspense and plot could keep your interest.

I was given the ACR copy of this book to review.

Shauna says

This book is WONDERFULLY AMAZING!

Intriguing!
Riveting!
Captivating!

All things good in a book!

Robert doesn't quite understand why he is being sent home....

And when he gets there it is not the same as when he left...

Unemployment, violence, food shortages, government unraveling, possible war...

People are struggling just to survive

and when they can't provide for their families they will do some pretty drastic things.

When Robert's dad is called on a special assignment his family will soon realize that it is the 'end's beginning.'

Includes phenomenal questions at the end of the book...really makes you think!

SO. SO. SO. GOOD!
DIDN'T WANT TO STOP READING!
WILL DEFINITELY READ MORE FROM THIS AUTHOR!

Julie King says

This story will resonate with LDS members. It all begins when a missionary son is sent home early, but told he has served a honorable mission. Violence, food shortages, rationing, and other signs point to a moral downward spiral. Callings from Church leaders soon follow and the family must survive while their faith is tested.

Brooke Berry says

I am always really interested in end of the world books, and this one did not disappoint. The over all story is pretty intense. The perspective changes from 4 different characters. Robert, his father, his mother, and the US Secretary of State. In the beginning it was difficult to figure out who each person was, and get your mind into which character you are reading. After you get to know them each a bit better it becomes easier, but for some reason that stopped me from attaching to much to the story. The ending more than makes up for it, and redeemed the book for me. Overall, I liked it, but didn't love it.

Hamster says

I don't normally read end-of-the world dramas or political thrillers, so it took me a little bit before I really got into this. But by the end I was really enjoying it. The coolest thing about this book was that it made the perilous last days seem real and imminent rather than the usual vague notion that "trials are coming." I'm definitely motivated to get my year supply now. This book should be required reading for all provident living classes.

Mike Siedschlag says

First the disclaimer: I won a print copy of The Gathering: End's Beginning by Randy Lindsay in a Goodreads Giveaway.

I have more mixed reactions to this book than probably any book I've read in quite some time. The most important (at least for me) , the story is very good. The plot moved along at a pace that kept me reading. In fact I read it in one day. The story line is engaging and will hold the readers interest.

Now for my other reactions.

The Gathering: End's Beginning is a pre-apocalyptic novel. Preparing for the end days. Definitely a favorite genre of mine; pre, post, mid, if it has to do with the apocalypse, bring it on. This story is told from a Mormon, or LDS perspective. That is fine. I don't profess to know a lot about Mormon doctrine so obviously can't comment on such issues.

However, I would say that this book is written to Mormons rather than about Mormons, if that makes any sense. I didn't get the feeling that it was meant to convince anyone to become a member of the LDS Church, but to separate the church from the rest of society. Not a bad idea as most religious denominations suggest the very same thing.

What threw me was the "discussion questions" at the end of the book. They are directed at someone with a more than passing understanding of Mormon doctrine. My reaction was to feel like I had been "tricked, duped, horns-waggled (choose your own adjective)" into reading a "tract". It left me feeling a little uncomfortable. I hold no particular antipathy towards the Mormon faith, or any other faith for that matter. I have my own Christian beliefs and see no reason to start any argument here.

The other glaring problem for me was in the way characters were handled. Of course church members were portrayed very favorably (makes sense, not a problem). Various Church leaders were always presented by title, President, Bishop, Area President, etc. Fine so far. But then the political characters; President, Vice President, Secretary of State, were rarely identified as such. President of the United States Boggs was usually referred to as just "Boggs". It was a jarring counterpoint in the story for me.

The politicians behaved as badly as one would expect, caring more for their political position than for the people they were supposed to be serving. No problem there, pretty much the view I have of politicians in general, but the blatant disrespect for their title was difficult for me when church titles were respected. A little propaganda-ish for me.

The story is ended in such a way as to prepare the way for more. "End's Beginning" does suggest more to come. Thanks to author Randy Lindsay for not succumbing to the dreaded "cliffhanger".

So, bottom line, a mixed bag. Good story, but in my opinion, directed at a specific audience. Enjoy!

Mike

Melanie says

This is an intense book! It starts out strong and doesn't let up. Robert Williams is sent home six months early from his mission with an honorable release. He's struggling with this because he really wanted to finish and feels that he's done something wrong. He learns that others have also been sent home but they aren't given details as to why. As he comes off the plane, we meet his family: his dad, John, mom, Becky, and siblings Lucas and Sara. Their part of the story takes place in Houston, Texas.

Then we shift to Washington, D.C. and meet Calvin McCord, the Secretary of State who is in the opposite political party as the President. He's a pariah and is able to get important information to the President with much difficulty and opposition.

The book continues to shift back and forth between different members of the Williams family and Calvin McCord. Robert is trying to adjust to life after his mission and it's difficult, especially when work is hard to come by. Becky is trying to run her household as well as possible and we learn some of the consequences of food shortages. John gets a huge church assignment which takes him away from his family for a while.

This book has a lot of tension. I felt on edge a little bit while reading it but was so fascinated that I couldn't turn the pages fast enough. I'm used to books where the end comes with a bang and everyone has to quickly figure out what to do but this book explores a more gradual end of times scenario, which is quite realistic.

Each character has their fair share of trials and I felt for each character as I was reading about them. Robert, as he's trying to find a new life plan post-mission and deals with more violence than he's used to, John, as he's in the middle of nowhere away from his family trying to bring a group of men together and dealing with

a neighboring hostile town, and Calvin as he's in the middle of a group of people that hate him and want to stop him from doing his job. I felt the most for Becky, though, probably because she's the one I can relate to the most. She had to try to keep everything running as smoothly as possible and she ran into some scary challenges. I wanted to have a breakdown for her but also know the importance of hanging in there and doing your best during those times.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. There are some good times, too, and hope and faith are spread throughout. The ending left a lot open and I'm looking forward to reading more! If you enjoy end of days type of books, this is worth reading! And also be sure to check out the Discussion Questions at the end. They're thought provoking and timely.

Mel's Shelves

Laura Walker says

I really enjoyed this book. The events that transpired coincided so well with the events that I've read about in the non-fiction genre in respect to Christ's Second Coming. Randy Lindsay describes the political scene well, although I do feel that Asian countries will be involved in the unrest as well as Russia. We as families, churches, and a nation will have to figure out how to pull together in order to be prepared to meet the coming storm.

Although I felt that it was a little unrealistic for a returned missionary to start dating a non-member as soon as he came home, I know that in rare cases, that does happen. Can't wait for the next installment.

Lisa (Bookworm Lisa) says

Books that have an "end of days", "apocalypse", "second coming" theme have always been a weakness of mind. There are many ways that an author can take a story line. There are many avenues open to interpretation that make for a great read.

Randy Lindsay has written a book that is compelling and entertaining. He caught my attention early in the story by having one of the main characters, Robert, heading home from his LDS mission early. Robert hadn't disobeyed rules, and was confused by the early release. (My son leaves on a mission to Chile in less than two weeks.) Robert is one of several young men leaving their missions early. This is an immediate heads up that something is about to happen.

The story also follows the Secretary of State for the United States. He is caught up in political wrangling. Washington DC is in a terminal state of distrust. Finger pointing and blame run rampant, and the US has had more terrorist attacks on US soil. It appears as if the terrorists have changed tactics, distrust between parties and people could lead to Civil War.

I liked that he wrote the story from two different angles. A family struggling in uncertain times and a politician trying to uncover the truth. Both angles add depth to the story and paint a picture of a world in turmoil.

To me, this story was a great reminder to prepare myself intellectually, spiritually, and temporally for anything that may or may not happen in life. It looks like we can expect more to come after this book, I'm

looking forward to continuing the story in the next installment.

Kelly L. says

Randy engages the reader from the get-go and doesn't relinquish his grip. One of the things I liked best about this story is that the author doesn't waste time with details that have nothing to do with moving the story forward. He respects his audience by letting our imaginations and common sense fill in the blanks. Though an LDS story, "The Gathering" lacks the cheese and sappy content for which the genre is known. A very good read that has created an appetite for Book 2, which, after this book's ending, better happen soon!

Brock Booher says

Are you ready?

This LDS fiction made me wonder if I was ready, or more importantly if I had prepared my family. Randy Lindsay uses the power of his imagination to put you into the final days before the second coming of Jesus Christ. He picked several POV characters that help us feel the varied emotions of a family as they deal with unraveling of society and challenges associated with a world spinning out of control. Even though he writes using an LDS perspective, the story is well told and will make all Christians think about the second coming of Christ in new ways. The prose is clean and the story doesn't drag. Likewise the story doesn't end with this book. Randy Lindsay has promised to continue the story and I look forward to reading it.

In the meantime, I need to get better prepared for things to come.

Katie W says

Things immediately happen with a bang--Robert is sent home from his mission 6 months early without any known reason. He's told that he's served honorably and that's it. When he arrives home, he's surprised to see how much things have changed.

Another story is running parallel to this one: one about the government. The Secretary of State is trying to find the truth to what's really going on in the world affairs.

I really enjoyed the characters and the way they each handled their situations. Even the strong wanted to give up at times and didn't feel very Christlike to those who were tormenting them. Not one family appeared to be perfect--they had members struggling and the feelings shown were real. I was able to put myself in the story and that scared me just a little.

I know if we're prepared, we need not fear, yet this story opened my eyes and mind to events that I'd never really thought much about. The scary thing is, this story could really happen. The progression of the events was so realistic that I wouldn't be surprised to have any of them happen next week. I thought this story was told in a very believable way.

I'm assuming this is the beginning of a series (I hope) and what a great beginning it was!

Content: There is some violence, but nothing is graphic. Clean.

Adrienne Quintana says

A sobering read, but well written. The story follows the lives of four main characters that experience the chaos that will eventually build to the second coming. I think the purpose of the book is to get you thinking: Do I have what I need? Do I have what it takes? If you like to watch Doomsday Preppers (as I do), this book is right up your alley.
