

‘Left Behind’ Has No Hope of Deliverance

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 3, 2014 - 5:07pm

- [Cassie Thomson](#) [2]
- [Chad Michael Murray](#) [3]
- [Freestyle Releasing](#) [4]
- [Gary Grubbs](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Jerry B. Jenkins](#) [7]
- [Jordin Sparks](#) [8]
- [Lea Thompson](#) [9]
- [Left Behind](#) [10]
- [Martin Klebba](#) [11]
- [Movie Review](#) [12]
- [Nicky Whelan](#) [13]
- [Nicolas Cage](#) [14]
- [Spike Walters](#) [15]
- [Tim LaHaye](#) [16]
- [Vic Armstrong](#) [17]
- [William Ragsdale](#) [18]



Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Onscreen, Nicolas Cage is more sinner than saint these days. And he’ll need a whole month’s worth of Hail Marys to atone for this latest cinematic scourge upon the multiplex. While the promise of late career Cage in an apocalyptic Christian rapture thriller has hope, “Left Behind” has something to leave both bad movie aficionados and the Christian faithful sorely disappointed.

The end times have a seemingly endless fascination for a certain devoted section of the Evangelical Christian populace, but it brings out the worst in the faithful filmmakers that try to tackle it. Instead of genuine suspense, we get ham-fisted preachiness. Growing up, and attending Bible summer camp, I watched a 1970’s rapture flick called “A Thief In The Night.” That ramped up the over-the-top hysterics to 11. A little hysterics would have been welcome here.

This is actually the second try at rebooting the inexplicably popular book series. The 2001 version boasted proudly of Kirk Cameron’s drawing power, and launched several direct to video sequels. Producers were unhappy with the bargain basement look and wanted to make a bigger budgeted conventional Hollywood production. This film aims to be a high octane action movie, but it’s positively sleepy at times.



In the Cage: Nicolas Cage in ‘Left Behind’

Photo credit: Freestyle Releasing

It supposedly cost 15 million dollars to make, but precious little of it made it onscreen. Presumably much of it went into the pocket of Cage, who plays Captain Rayford Steele. He's an airline pilot whose marriage has turned frosty ever since his wife (Lea Thompson) found God. He gets to say things like "if she's going to run off with another man it might as well be Jesus," as he ditches his own family for a clandestine getaway with an attractive flight attendant and a U2 concert in London. Meanwhile, his unbelieving daughter Chloe (Cassie Thomson) spends her time getting into arguments with Christians she randomly meets in the airport.

After 45 minutes or so the rapture comes and people unconvincingly vanish into thin air leaving only piles of clothes and personal effects behind. The film strips down the action to focus on essentially two settings. There's Cage and a plane full of colorful passengers in air – including a gambling midget, investigative journalist Buck Williams (Chad Michael Murray taking over the role Kirk Cameron played in the original), a hysterical football wife (Jordin Sparks), a conspiracy theorist, a bolo-tie-wearing rich creep, a Muslim and a drug addicted rich girl.

Meanwhile Chloe does a lot of running on the ground while director Vic Armstrong unsuccessfully tries to get his indifferent extras to convey a sense of genuine panic. Every now and then the filmmakers try to pull off a big special effect as if they were trying to prove to the audience that this a real big time Hollywood movie. But those stunts, including a pilotless plane crashing into a parking lot and lots of driverless cars run amok, are more likely to elicit guffaws than awes.

For a movie that aims to preach to the choir its depiction of the faithful is not exactly flattering. Everyone who believes is portrayed as a judgmental, Bible-verse-spouting loony. The film only briefly gives any weight to its central theological question. Otherwise it is awfully acted, poorly written, and comes complete with a chintzy looking plane crash that looked like it could have been created on a 1997 Amiga.



Chad Michael Murray Looks Concerned in 'Left Behind'

Photo credit: Freestyle Releasing

Its sole pleasures come courtesy of Nicolas Cage. The unintentional hilarity reaches its zenith when he investigates one of the vanished women's effects and finds the ominous words "BIBLE STUDY" scrawled upon the page, or utters Christian movie action dialogue like "If you believe in prayer, now would be the time." But those moments are sadly few and far between, as the film is largely unwilling to embrace Cage's scenery gnawing abilities.

"Left Behind" is unlikely to bring in any new converts, but it could have audiences – both believers and non-believers alike – praying for deliverance.

"Left Behind" opens everywhere October 3rd. Featuring Nicolas Cage, Chad Michael Murray, Cassie Thomson, Lea Thompson, and Jordin Sparks. Written by Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye. Directed by Vic Armstrong. Rated "PG-13"



[19]

By [SPIKE WALTERS](#) [20]

Contributor

HollywoodChicago.com

spike@hollywoodchicago.com [19]

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 28 2024 - 8:52am*): <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/24577/left-behind-has-no-hope-of-deliverance>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/cassie-thomson>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/chad-michael-murray>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/freestyle-releasing>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/gary-grubbs>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jerry-b-jenkins>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jordin-sparks>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/lea-thompson>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/left-behind>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/martin-klebba>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/nicky-whelan>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/nicolas-cage>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/spike-walters>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/tim-lahaye>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/vic-armstrong>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/william-ragsdale>
- [19] <mailto:spike@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#SPIKE>