

# FOREWORD

Now anyone can gain an understanding of Bible prophecy! *The Eternal Crown* contains insights that can be easily understood. The author makes a compelling case to simply listen to what Jesus said, and to the prophets who wrote the Bible.

I believe that we must re-evaluate widely held end-time prophecy beliefs. Reassessment is needed because many currently held understandings were built on a biased dispensational framework. This situation is detailed in an appendix to this book.

I published excerpts from *The Eternal Crown* in a newsletter to over a thousand pastors. As countless believers come to Christ in Asia, they should not automatically accept the leading end-time experts of today. Instead, we must listen to the experts of yesterday—the authentic prophets who wrote the Bible.

It is sobering to consider that the religious experts of the first century completely misinterpreted the first coming of the Messiah. By the power and authority of the Holy Spirit, may we more awesomely keep watch for the return of Christ!



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I am a Colonel (retired) from the United States Air Force. I have led Bible study groups, worked with church youth groups, and served as an elder. My interests also include promoting the Gospel message in remote areas of the world.

I am fully responsible for the contents of this book. I believe every word to be correct, but have been wrong before. Where error may be present, I pray that readers still find worthwhile concepts.

Sincerely,  
Paul Shonebarger

## **Invitation**

I invite you to accept a restored relationship with God—to accept the personal, covenant relationship that God offers.

I invite believers to restore broken relationships. I urge you to forgive, as God has already forgiven you.



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# INTRODUCTION

People are often hesitant to read Bible prophecy. In a similar manner, countless experts of the Christian faith have declared that a person should study the 65 preceding books in the Bible first—before attempting to comprehend the prophecy written in the last book, titled “Revelation.”

However, this does not match the attitude of the Apostle Paul. He routinely spoke about the end-times to the church in Thessalonica. This group had limited instruction. But to these new believers, Paul packed two letters full of end-time information. For example each chapter in his initial letter, called 1st Thessalonians, ends with a reference to the end-times.

By conducting business this way, Paul endorsed the teaching of end-times prophecy as an everyday topic. Paul was blunt in his expectation that people learn, and be able to recall end-time principles. Paul asked about end-time principles, *Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?* (2 Thessalonians 2:5)

The value of understanding end-times prophecy is infinite. When our excitement is high—so is our commitment—and our ability to make a difference. Believers need passion in our relationship with God. We need to be on the edge of our seats, leaning forward, and paying attention.

Here is a simple concept: when you can see the battle, it becomes impossible to remain complacent. Remember September 11, 2001 when over and over again, you saw tapes of a plane crashing into the World Trade Center? When you saw a ruthless enemy attack—your attention on the battle became focused.

On September 10, 2001, the United States was subtly under attack as terrorists quietly moved into position. There was little passion within the United States that day simply because no one could see that the battle had already begun.

In a similar manner, the reading of end-time Bible prophecy puts those who understand on the edge of their seat. Upon seeing the ongoing spiritual battle—we become passionate for God.



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# The Bible's track record

In order to make known the supernatural nature of scripture, God flawlessly foretold epic world events hundreds, even thousands of years before they occurred. For example, Old Testament scriptures foretold the life of Jesus.

## PROPHECY FORETELLING JESUS OF NAZARETH

EVENT	FORESHADOW	FULFILLED
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Luke 2:4-7
Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Luke 1:26-31
Birth resulted in King Herod's order to slaughter children in Bethlehem; Given advanced warning, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus escaped to Egypt	Jeremiah 31:15 Rachael was a prominent mother of Israeli people (Genesis 35:19)	Matthew 2:13-21
Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned to Israel from Egypt.	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:14-15
Jesus entered Jerusalem 483 years after the command of King Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem—exactly as Daniel foretold over 500 years ahead of time.	Daniel 9:24-26 Ezra 7:11-28	Matthew 21:1-11
Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey.	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-5
Jesus was betrayed, handed to Roman authority, by a disciple—Judas.	Psalms 41:9	Luke 22:47
Jesus responds to the charges against him with silence.	Isaiah 53:7	Mark 15:4-5
Jesus is rejected by Israel, then sentenced to die. His sufferings paid the penalty for my sin. He died to rescue me from an eternal punishment in hell.	Isaiah 53:2-7	John 1:11, Luke 23:13-46
Nails pierced Jesus' hands and feet; a soldier's lance pierced Jesus' heart.	Psalms 22:16 Zechariah 12:10	John 20:27 John 19:34

Scriptures predict more than just events in the life of Jesus. Moses foretold the destruction of Israel over a thousand years before it happened. (Deuteronomy 28:63-66) This destruction occurred in 70 AD at the hands of the Roman army. Ezekiel continued this story when he predicted that a modern nation of Israel would be established. (Ezekiel 39:23-29) As foretold, modern Israel was born May 14, 1948.

Authors of Bible prophecy also predicted catastrophic events that will one day end our world. Know that the onset of end-time events will occur rapidly. In the Old Testament, Daniel warned that the end-times will *come like a flood*. (Daniel 9:26) Later, Jesus likened the rapid onset to the end of our Age with the *flood* that ended the previous Age with Noah. (Matthew 24:36-39)

It is encouraging to note that God warned Noah and his family, enough in advance for them to build a very large boat. God is warning again today—warnings for anyone who cares to listen.

## Uncovering our future

Daniel was a prophet whom God protected when the King of Babylon ordered him thrown to hungry lions. God also showed Daniel visions of the end-times, over 2,500 years ago; but Daniel did not understand what he saw. Daniel wrote, *I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, “My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?” He replied, “Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.”* (see Daniel 12:8, 9)

Daniel did not understand what God showed him about the end-times so he requested an explanation, *“My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?”* God responded by telling him to *“go on your way”*—which roughly translates *“don’t dwell on your lack of understanding; just go on with your life.”* God then assured Daniel—that in *the time of the end* these scriptures will no longer be *sealed*—which roughly translates *“as end-times approach, my people will understand this prophecy.”*

Scriptures foretold events that will occur prior to Jesus’ return to earth. Much of this prophecy can be understood today.

## SCRIPTURE FORETELLING JESUS' RETURN

Foretold event ...	Today we know ...
Israel would be destroyed. (Deuteronomy 28:63-66; Luke 19:43-44)	Roman armies destroyed Israel in 70 AD, then sold the Israeli people into slavery or slaughtered them.
After considerable time, the Jews would return to Israel. (Ezekiel 39:23-25)	Israel was reestablished May 14, 1948.
A Roman Empire will be the dominant end-time superpower. (Daniel 9:26; note <i>the people</i> were of a Roman army)	The founding document for the European Union was <i>The Treaty of Rome</i> . (1957) The Roman Empire, foreseen by the prophet Daniel 2,500 years ago, is still alive today.
That “ <i>wormwood</i> ” would have a new meaning—other than being a plant found throughout the world. (Revelation 8:10-11)	A power plant named Chernobyl (which translates as “ <i>wormwood</i> ” in Russian and Ukrainian languages) would become synonymous with nuclear contamination.
That <i>every people, tribe, language and nation</i> will witness an event lasting only three and a half days. (Revelation 11:9)	Invention of television allows people around the globe to witness an event simultaneously.
Those who are to attack Jerusalem: <i>their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet...</i> (Zechariah 14:12)	Nuclear weapons burn so instantaneously, that fire can consume flesh before it even falls to the ground.
That all people will be required to participate in a computer-based currency—forced <i>to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.</i> (Revelation 13:16-17)	Events force world economies toward a computer-based currency. For example, there is an increased need to track the financing of terrorist and other illegal activities. With large government budget deficits, the need to track taxable income becomes increasingly evident. At the same time, counterfeiters armed with increased photocopy technologies are making cash obsolete.

<p>An unfaithful (adulterous) church would be built on <i>seven hills</i>, and would be called, “<i>Babylon</i>.” (Revelation 17:5-9)</p>	<p>A worldwide religious organization—with religious traditions that started in ancient Babylon—was built inside Rome—which is frequently called “the city of <i>seven hills</i>.”</p>
<p>That Israel would militarily defeat Russia. (Ezekiel 38:14-23; Zechariah 12:9)</p>	<p>Israel obtained nuclear weapons capable of destroying any invading army.</p>
<p>Islam would also attempt to invade Israel. (Ezekiel 38:5)</p>	<p>Nations once considered third world powers become global superpowers, as they obtain nuclear weapons.</p>
<p>That <i>all the nations of the earth</i> would be <i>gathered against</i> Jerusalem. (Zechariah 12:3)</p>	<p>Jerusalem has already been a target for United Nations control—more is to follow. (UN General Assembly Resolution on The Internationalization of Jerusalem, The General Assembly, December 9, 1949)</p>
<p>The final battle will be for Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple Mount. (Revelation 16:16)</p>	<p>The valley of Armageddon remains critical to the military control of all Israel.</p>
<p>Speaking from the Temple Mount, Antichrist will claim to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)</p>	<p>The significance Judaism, Islam, and even many Christians continue to place on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.</p>

# INTERPRETATION

Prophecy interpretation should be made in light of other scriptures, the context, and be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, this book departs from the usual practice of interpreting end-time scriptures from the intellect-based dispensational viewpoint.

Fresh perspective in prophecy interpretation is needed, because what Jesus emphasized about the end-times is routinely being overlooked. For example, Jesus taught three parables, or stories, teaching how end-time believers should live—what our priorities should be. Jesus taught these parables the week of his death. There is nothing in the text or context that indicates he was kidding. (Matthew 24:36-25:30)

Scripture foretold that more easily accepted scriptural teaching would become widely accepted: *For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.* (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

The most quickly accepted view of the end times comes through the popular “dispensational” interpretation. The primary *myth* that believers quickly accept is that no Christian alive at the start of the end times will suffer at all through the final seven-years of our Age. Hal Lindsey (*The Late Great Planet Earth*) and Tim LaHaye (*Left Behind* series) and other authors sold tens of millions of books while disseminating this misinterpretation worldwide.

To paraphrase the dispensational view of the last seven years of our Age: “As a believer in Christ, you will not be impacted by the final seven years of hardship and suffering that will affect the entire world; all believers will be removed from the earth just as these years begin.”

In contrast, Jesus repeatedly and emphatically warned us to *keep watch* for his return to earth. Jesus taught, *Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.* (Matthew 24:42) What Jesus stated is in sharp contrast to the more complacent dispensational viewpoint.

Jesus next warned that the person who does not *keep watch*—will feel robbed. *But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you must also be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.* (Matthew 24:43-44)

Jesus will discipline those who do not keep watch. He will take action in opposition to even believing *servants*. He will deal with complacent believers as if they were *hypocrites*. Jesus said concerning these believers, *The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (Matthew 24:50-51)

Being assigned a position with hypocrites during the most critical hours of world history will be no small matter. Jesus has always been direct in confronting hypocrisy. (Matthew 23)

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**Why did Jesus repeatedly warn us  
to “keep watch” for his return?  
Read this book to understand!**

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