

CONTENTS

PART 1: The Definition, Nature, and Importance of Bible Prophecy

- 1. What Is Bible Prophecy, and Why Is It So Important? 7
- 2. How Does Prophecy Prove Divine Authorship? 21
- 3. What Are the Practical Benefits of Studying Bible Prophecy?..... 33

PART 2: The Key Building Blocks of Bible Prophecy

- 4. Key Terms Defined 43
- 5. The Four Interpretation Methods 51
- 6. The Three Views of the Rapture..... 61
- 7. Five Reasons to Believe in the Pre-Tribulation
View of the Rapture..... 73
- 8. The Three Views of the Millennium 87
- 9. The Keys to Watching God's Plan Unfold 95

PART 3: Important Sections and Categories

- 10. Daniel's Visions.....105
- 11. The Olivet Discourse 117
- 12. John's Revelation 127

PART 4: So Where Are We Now?

13. The Super Sign—Israel	145
14. The Geopolitical Signs	157
15. The Signs of Nature	169
16. The Spiritual Signs	179
17. The Signs of Culture	191
18. The Signs of Technology	199
19. The Sign of Convergence	209
20. The Safest Place to Be (in Christ)	215
21. How Should We Live?	223

PART 1:

**THE DEFINITION, NATURE,
AND IMPORTANCE OF
BIBLE PROPHECY**

CHAPTER 1

What Is Bible Prophecy, and Why Is It So Important?

"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

ACTS 1:11

Have you ever really thought about the truth contained in this verse or in many others like it? If the idea of Christ's return has become overly familiar to you, read that verse again and let it sink in as if you had never read it before. Scripture tells us Jesus is literally coming back to earth one day. Are you aware of how frequently the writers of the New Testament wrote about the promised return of Christ? Of the 27 books in the New Testament, 23 mention his return.

Jesus often spoke about it himself. In the 66 books of the Bible, you'll find that one out of every 30 verses refers to the return of Christ or the topic of the end times. So it's fair to say this is a major biblical theme from cover to cover. (Sidebar/Insert: Infographic chart of the statistics above.)

Down through the centuries, Jesus's followers have fully believed, taught, and expected that he would return. During the past 2,000 years of church history, core Christian beliefs have been codified into simple statements of faith called creeds. These concise statements affirm that the

27-33%
PROPHECY

10,000+
VERSES

50%
FULFILLED

50%
FUTURE

Copyrighted Material

return of Christ has always been a key focus of the Christian faith. This truth has brought encouragement to generations of Christians who have looked to a promised future where all things will be made right. We are reminded of this promise every time we take communion and “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). We also pray for the arrival of the end times in the Lord’s prayer whenever we pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).



However, in recent decades, the topic of Christ’s return has, for various reasons, taken a bad rap. What comes to mind when you read these words? *Revelation. Apocalypse. Armageddon. End times. The last days. Judgment.* If images of a bullhorn-wielding sidewalk preacher donned in a sandwich board comes to mind, you are not alone.

Unfortunately the topic of Christ’s return has been hijacked by caricatured notions of what the Bible actually teaches. It’s not a doom-and-gloom scare tactic. His return is a foundational truth of the Christian faith, but in our day, we tend to treat the topic like a crazy uncle the family never talks about.

In conversations with fellow believers, I find that most of them truly believe the Lord is going to return at some point, but they see this as a distant event with no real relevance for us today. Many are confused about the last days or they completely ignore the topic. This is understandable for many reasons, but I hope to demonstrate through this book that studying eschatology and Bible prophecy is a thousand times more relevant and practical than many Christians realize.

Revelation 1:3—Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Revelation 1:3 boldly states, “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” So the final book of the



Bible, which many believers in our day tend to avoid, informs us that there are specific blessings for those who read it!

Some of the confusion and apathy about end-times events is caused by the fact there are multiple views, interpretive disagreements, and case after case of failed predictions about when Christ would return—a practice that violates Scripture. Matthew 24:36 says, “About that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” That’s about as clear as Jesus could get, yet it seems there is an endless parade of people picking dates for Christ’s return. This does unnecessary harm to the Christian faith. One of the main goals of this book is to address this

confusion and to demonstrate that not only can Revelation and other prophetic texts be understood, but that by studying them your faith will grow and your relationship with Jesus will deepen.

There’s another reason I wrote this book. The world is a scary place right now, and many people are wondering what is going on. There has always been instability, but never on the global scale that we see in our day. It seems like the world is going to hell in a handbasket. I don’t know exactly what a handbasket is, but the term seems to fit.

Consider this list of some of the unprecedented conditions of our day:

- terrorism on almost every continent
- global refugee crisis
- international financial instability
- division in America



- Ebola, Zika, superbugs, and other diseases
- one record-breaking natural disaster after another
- citizens killing cops, and cops killing citizens
- racial tensions
- widespread genocide
- mass shootings
- civil wars and uprisings
- unparalleled persecution of Christians
- people selling baby parts while culture yawns
- dangerous countries getting nukes
- ever-increasing immorality and family breakdown
- occultism and unprecedented hedonism on display by our pop-culture icons
- cyberwarfare
- political corruption and distrust at an all-time high
- the decline of America

Aren't you glad you read that list? Read on. I promise it will get more encouraging.



Is this just the way things are, or are these signals that history is drawing to a close? Suddenly, the notion isn't that crazy. Even secular futurologists are sounding the alarms as they see converging lines of danger and instability around the world. TV shows and movies with apocalyptic themes abound. These trends are clearly on the minds of everyone who has turned on the news the past few years. It's time to talk about this elephant in the room.

POP-CULTURE MEDIA TRENDS

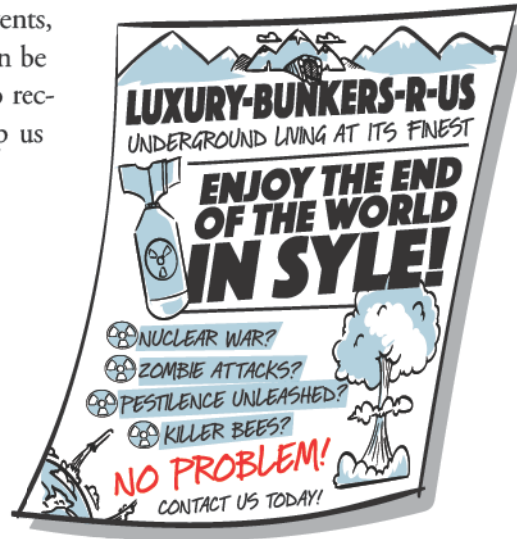
957 "APOCALYPTIC" MOVIES
67% of those since 2000

88 "APOCALYPTIC" TV SHOWS
66% of those since 2000 (Source: IMDb.com)

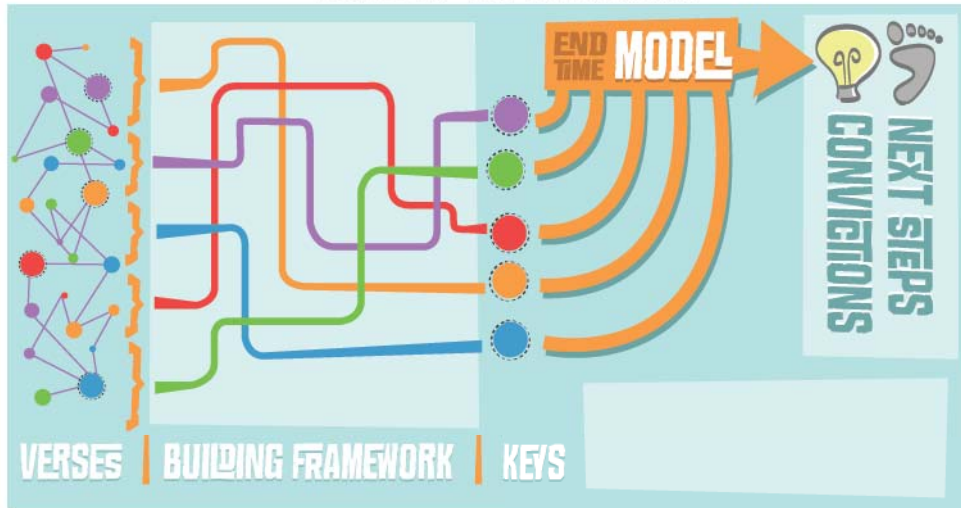
So, should we buy space in a luxury underground community bunker? I'm not joking; they're actually out there. Should we begin stocking up on food, ammo, and medicine? Or should we live with boldness, hope, joy, expectation, and confidence

in a soon-coming King? Can the Bible shed light on what we are witnessing in the world today and provide clear marching orders?

This book will answer those end-time questions and more. My goal is to make complex things simple and move you from a state of ambiguity and confusion to one of courage and clarity. After you read this book, my hope is that you will walk away with a firm understanding of key end-time events, see that the book of Revelation can be clearly understood, and be able to recognize the biblical signs that help us understand our times.



Copyrighted Material



Answers to Basic Questions About Bible Prophecy

Using the analogy of building a house, let's start the work of laying the foundation by answering some basic but very important questions.



1. What Is Bible Prophecy?

Simply put, Bible prophecy is God revealing history in advance. Prophecies are divinely inspired revelations given by God through a person. Prophecies were given as predictions, warnings, or directives for taking action. In the New Testament, Peter tells us how prophecies were given:

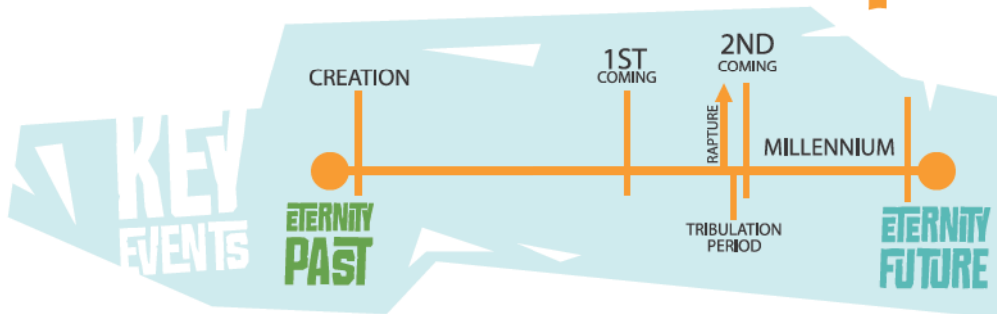
Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though

human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The technical term for the study of end-time Bible prophecy events is *eschatology*. Eschatology means “the study of last things.” *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary* defines it as “a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of humankind.” Eschatology touches on all other key areas of systematic biblical study.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, introduces key themes that are progressively revealed in later books, and these themes find their final resolution in Revelation—the last and distinctively prophetic book of the Bible. The Bible, though written by at least 39 men on three continents over a period of at least 1500 years, tells one complete story beginning with eternity past and ending with eternity future.

39 WRITERS
3 CONTINENTS
1500 YEARS
1 STORY



Unlike the vague predictions of modern-day psychics and palm readers, Bible prophecies are specific predictions of future events given through God’s appointed prophets. The main test of a true prophet is that their predictions must come true 100 percent of the time.

If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed (Deuteronomy 18:22).

Copyrighted Material


Another important test of a prophet is that their prophecies must agree with Scripture and not cause anyone to worship false gods.


If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him (Deuteronomy 13:1-4).



Another important aspect of prophecy is that it displays the character and nature of God. Through the prophets, God made it clear that only he can appoint and predict future events. In essence, God ties his own credibility and character to the accuracy of Bible prophecy.

I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else, nor share my praise with carved idols. Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens (Isaiah 42:8-9 NLT).

 **sover•er•eign** = God is in control
adjective

om•nis•cient = God is actually the only
adjective true "know-it-all" 

2. Why Is Bible Prophecy Important for You?

Here's why Bible prophecy is important for you. Fulfilled Bible prophecy is one of the most compelling evidences that the Bible is from God. As you will

discover in this book, major historical events were told centuries, and in some cases, thousands of years in advance. These prophecies were fulfilled to the exact detail. No other document in the world can make this claim. The only logical explanation is that the book is supernatural in nature.

WORLD EVENTS PROPHESED IN SCRIPTURE

FOUR EMPIRES: BABYLON, MEDO-PERSIA, GREECE, ROME	DANIEL CH. 2, 7
DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY OF TYRE	EZEKIEL 26
DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY OF SIDON	EZEKIEL 28
PERSIAN KING CYRUS PROPHESED BY NAME	ISAIAH 44:28
JEWISH PEOPLE WOULD BE DISPERSED 2X'S	ISAIAH 11:11
ISRAEL WOULD BE REBORN IN A DAY AFTER A LONG TIME	ISAIAH 66:8
KNOWLEDGE AND TRAVEL WOULD GREATLY INCREASE	DANIEL 12:4
WORLD WAR	MATTHEW 24

I can't show God to you, but I can show you his fingerprints all over fulfilled prophecy. I would encourage you to read this book with an attitude of genuine truth-seeking wherever it may lead. Christianity is believed by faith, but I hope to demonstrate to you that it is a faith built on facts and evidence rather than a blind faith. God never expected us to check our brains at the door as we consider the claims of Scripture. For those sincerely seeking patterns of evidence, I believe these patterns will lead you to the God of the Bible.



Fulfilled Bible prophecy also demonstrates God's faithfulness. He is a promise-keeper. One expert states, "It is a well-known fact among prophecy scholars that there were more than one thousand prophecies contained within the Bible at the time that it was written, and over five hundred of these have been fulfilled. The remainder are end-time prophecies whose time has not yet come."¹

1000+
PROPHECIES
500
ALREADY
FULFILLED

Experts report that 27-33 percent of the Bible is prophecy. More than 10,000 of the 31,102 verses in the Bible contain prophecy, and half of those have already been fulfilled. That is no small down payment. God has put his money where his mouth is and demonstrated his promise-keeping faithfulness to generations of believers.

End-time prophecies predict several breathtaking events, not the least of which is the rapture, in which all true believers in Christ will be taken to be with the Lord in an instant prior to a terrible time on Earth known as the tribulation. If not for the avalanche of already-fulfilled prophecies, it would be extremely difficult to believe some of the amazing claims of end-time prophecies.

QUICK FACTS: ABOUT THE RAPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 are the primary texts describing the Rapture. The term "rapture" comes from the Latin word "rapturo", which is a translation of the Greek verb "caught up" that is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Calling it "the rapture" is a bit easier than calling it "the caught up".

Last but not least, Bible prophecy should motivate us to share the good news about God's free gift of salvation with our friends and loved ones. Whether we'll see the Lord return in our day or not, we are closer to those events than any other generation in history. Furthermore, we are witnessing a convergence of end-time conditions which, at the very least, demonstrate that the world is

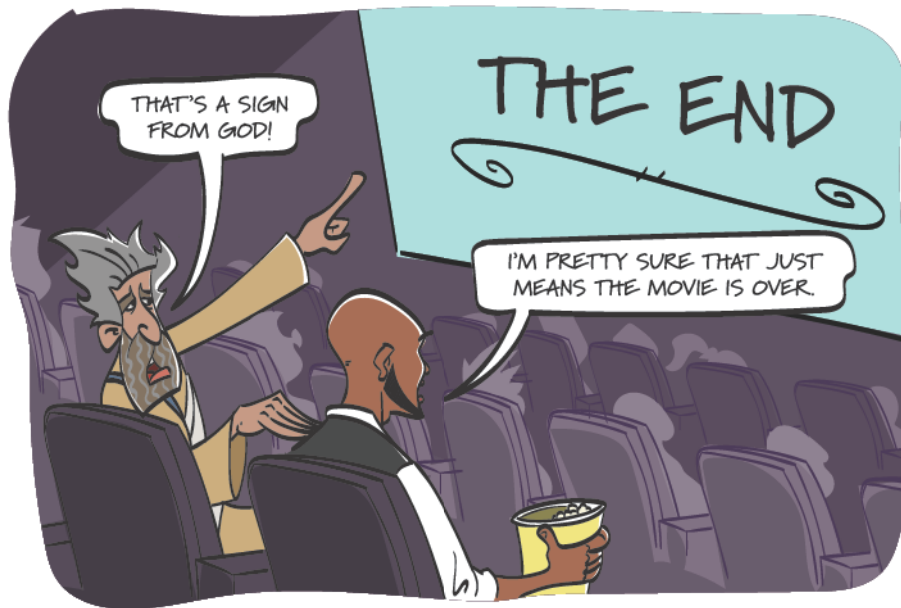
being readied for end-time prophecies to be fulfilled. As one prophecy expert often says, “Things are not falling apart, they are falling into place!”



Even if the Lord does not return in our lifetime, we all need to be ready to meet him at death. When my mother died a few years ago, the suddenness of her sickness and death took me by surprise. It also reminded me that we are not guaranteed tomorrow. In Christ, we have the answer to everything, and we need to share that!

Romans 1:16—For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes

3. What Are the End-Time Signs?



When you hear people refer to end-time signs, they are generally talking about one of two things. First, they may be referring to specific signs the Bible tells us

to look for that signal the nearness of Christ's return. Second, they may be talking about specific world conditions forming in our day that mirror the conditions described in Bible prophecy. These conditions are logically necessary for key events to occur during the seven-year tribulation mentioned above.

SIGN TYPES

SPECIFIC SIGNS END-TIME CONDITIONS

We will cover both categories and list specific signs in later chapters. For now I want to define what a legitimate end-time sign is. I also want to show that attempting to understand our time is approved and encouraged in Scripture. We are told in 1 Chronicles 12:32 that the leaders of Issachar “understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take” (NLT). The wise men from the East (Matthew 2:1-2), the godly old man Simeon (Luke 2:25-35), and the old prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36-38) all understood the timeframe of the Lord's first arrival, and their amazing stories are recorded for us in Scripture.

QUICK FACT: DID YOU KNOW...

the wise men from the east were linked to ancient Babylon where the prophet Daniel was in captivity and gave time-specific prophecies of the coming messiah?



Copyrighted Material

We also find that Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and the crowds of people for not knowing the signs of their day. To the scribes and Pharisees he said, “You know how to interpret the weather signs in the sky, but you don’t know how to interpret the signs of the times!” (Matthew 16:3 NLT). To the crowds he said, “You fools! You know how to interpret the weather signs of the earth and sky, but you don’t know how to interpret the present times” (Luke 12:56 NLT).

In what is known as the Olivet Discourse, Jesus responded to a question asked by his disciples. After informing them that the beautiful temple and surrounding buildings they were admiring would be completely destroyed, the disciples asked Jesus a critical three-part question.

**THIS WAS FULFILLED
37 YEARS LATER
BY THE ROMANS IN A.D. 70**

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3).

Rather than rebuke them or downplay the question, Jesus gave them a full chapter’s worth of signs followed by another full chapter of related parables. This central teaching by Jesus regarding the end-time signs is recorded in three of the four Gospels—in Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13.

THE “OLIVET DISCOURSE”

IS A FANCY WAY OF SAYING, “the talk Jesus had with his disciples on the mountain ridge with the olive trees on it just east of Jerusalem.”

The apostle Paul, whom God used to take Christianity to the Gentiles, realized that the church age was the last age or era before the rapture and the terrible tribulation period. He tells us in Romans 13:11-12, “This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here.” If this was true in Paul’s day, it’s even truer today, since almost 2,000 years have passed.

Finally, the writer of Hebrews provides the insight that those who are alive close to the time of Jesus's return will be able to recognize that they are in the season of the Lord's coming. Consider the bold statement in the latter part of this verse: "...not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

The Main Reason for Prophecy

"The essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus" (Revelation 19:10 NLT).

Studying Bible prophecy and understanding our times is one of the most fascinating and faith-building adventures we can take. The verse above informs

us that the main purpose of prophecy is to give us a clear portrait of Jesus. He came the first time as a suffering servant and paid for our sins with his life. He rose from the grave and defeated death and evil. One day soon he is coming back as a conquering King to claim that victory in all of its fullness. Studying Bible prophecy points us to these amazing events and gives us hope, direction, purpose, and strength in a scary and confusing time.



Now that we have laid a basic foundation by clarifying what Bible prophecy is and why it's important to every believer, including you, let's start building our metaphorical house as we define some key end-time terms and unpack the four main views Christians hold to about the last days.