

# THE LAST HOUR

AN ISRAELI INSIDER  
LOOKS AT  
THE END TIMES

AMIR TSARFATI



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To Miriam, my love

“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband.”

Proverbs 12:4 ESV

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## FOREWORD

I have known Amir Tsarfati for two decades. I had the privilege of traveling all over Israel with him when I was leading a tour and he was leading the tour guides. Amir has also spoken to the church I pastor in San Diego, California. He is an articulate and passionate supporter of Israel, the land where he was born.

Today, Amir's home overlooks the Valley of Megiddo—Armageddon—which is a constant reminder of the call that God has placed upon his life to teach from the Bible God's plan for the end times. This book is a part of that calling.

I have read hundreds of prophetic books in my ministerial lifetime, but I have never read a book like *The Last Hour*. This is a prophetic book written by a Jewish believer. You can feel the author's passion in his words. What he writes is not literature, it is his life. I am pretty sure that if you strike up a conversation with Amir, you will be talking about the future of Israel within the first thirty minutes.

I read *The Last Hour* in one sitting. I was immediately struck by the author's personal testimony and intrigued by the way the story of God's plan for the Jewish people paralleled the way

God has worked in his own life. Amir's defense of the uniqueness of Israel in God's plan of redemption and his arguments against replacing Israel with the Church leave no room for those who believe that God has forsaken His chosen people.

This book is about prophecy. The history of Israel, both ancient and recent, is at the core of end times truth. Beginning in Genesis chapter twelve with the Abrahamic covenant, we are taken on a journey of both joy and sorrow. Israel's periods of obedience seem to be overwhelmed by her rebellion against God and His prophets. Finally, God sends them their long-awaited Messiah and they nail Him to a cross and go on with their lives.

Pogroms and persecution scattered the Jewish people throughout the whole world. Amir reminds us of their awful suffering and suggests several reasons why, even today, this continues to be their experience. But the author will not let us forget God's promise of restoration, and since you are reading this book, you are alive to witness the fulfillment of that promise. The nation of Israel has returned to her land.

In a powerful speech to the United Nations General Assembly on October 1, 2015, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the miraculous preservation of the Jewish people:

In every generation, there were those who rose up to destroy our people. In antiquity, we faced destruction from the ancient empires of Babylon and Rome. In the Middle Ages, we faced inquisition and expulsion. And in modern times, we faced pogroms and the Holocaust. Yet the Jewish people persevered.

And now another regime has arisen, swearing to destroy Israel. That regime would be wise to consider this: I stand here today representing Israel, a country 67 years young, but the nation-state of a people nearly 4,000 years old. Yet the empires of Babylon and Rome are not represented in this hall of nations.

Neither is the Thousand Year Reich. Those seemingly invincible empires are long gone. But Israel lives. The people of Israel live.<sup>1</sup>

Israel has been described as “God’s time clock,” “God’s barometer,” “God’s prophetic clock,” “the powder keg fuse for the final world conflict,” “the touchstone of world politics,” and “the evidence that God is the God of history.” In 1948, with the establishment of Israel as a nation, the prophetic clock began ticking.

In the final chapters of *The Last Hour*, the author turns our attention to the 36<sup>th</sup> through 39<sup>th</sup> chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel. Reading these ancient words against the backdrop of what is happening today in Israel gives me the chills. What God has promised to His people, He is fulfilling, and you and I have been privileged to be alive to witness it.

As I finished reading this book, I thought of individuals I want to send it to. Some are believers who are very confused about the future and seem to have lost all interest in reading, talking or knowing about prophecy. This book is thoughtfully written, and it takes what could be confusing and makes it understandable. This is also an evangelistic book, and I believe that God is going to use it to open hearts to the Gospel. Finally, for followers of Christ, *The Last Hour* is a call to action. Time is winding down for the world as we know it today! The prophetic clock is nearing zero.

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

1. “Full Transcript of Netanyahu’s Address to UN General Assembly,” *Haaretz*, October 2, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.678524>

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Romans 13:11–14

Dr. David Jeremiah, founder and president, Turning Point;  
senior pastor, Shadow Mountain Community Church,  
El Cajon, California



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank the Lord for how He has carried me along from being a child without family, living apart from Him, to where I am today. He showed me His perfect love when He sent His only begotten Son to die in my place to pay for the things that I have done. This is amazing love!

I want to thank my wife, Miriam, and my four children, who pay the daily price of having me gone so much. They have sacrificed greatly, yet they have never complained and have only shown support and admiration.

I want to thank my team at Behold Israel for their love, support and dedication. H. T. and Tara, Gale and Florene, Donalee and Jeff, Andy and Gail, Trisha and Marc, Wayne and Cyn-die, Joanne, Hilary, Nachshon—you and so many others have worked tirelessly behind the scenes and off-camera to allow me to take the Lord's truth out to the four corners of the world.

Thank you to Kim Bangs, Esmé Bieberly and the team at Chosen Books.

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# 1

## LOOKING BACK BEFORE LOOKING FORWARD

**Y**ou may think the story of Israel is in its history; I believe the real story is in its future. Granted, I may be a bit biased. When I stand on the porch of my house, the Valley of Megiddo is spread out below me. The Bible calls it Armageddon—that infamous stretch of land where vast armies will assemble before marching to Jerusalem for the great final battle. It is hard to get the end times out of your mind when that valley is staring you in the face each day with your morning cup of coffee.

I can tell you, though, that as I gaze down into the lush, agricultural beauty of that valley, I have absolutely no fear. Sure, the armies for the culminating battle between good and evil are going to gather in my backyard, but I know that I will not be around to see them. I will be celebrating in the presence of my Lord and Savior, Jesus, enjoying the wonders of His presence and His heavenly surroundings. Because I have studied the

Bible, I have an understanding of what God has planned. That understanding gives me peace.

Ultimately, peace is one of God's goals for us in understanding prophecy, and it is also my goal for this book. It is easy to slip into fear when considering prophecy on a superficial level, but looking more deeply into God's promises gives me peace. When Jesus was about to leave His disciples for the cross, He encouraged them with these words: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Was this peace some mystical gift that He bestowed upon them? Did He simply breathe His peace into the room? No, the source of this otherworldly peace is seen in the previous verse: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26). This perfect peace would come from the truth and wisdom that Jesus had already taught to the disciples and from the great new insights that the Holy Spirit would give to them.

If you are a believer in Christ, there is no reason for you to fear what God has planned for this world. True, some nasty things are coming, but He has not destined His children for wrath. As you read this book, it will become clear that He has a plan for you and the rest of the Church—a plan for celebration and not judgment, a plan for joy and not sorrow, a plan for peace and not fear.

## Where I Sit

I once heard a man say that it is important to let people know where you sit before you tell them where you stand. To that end, I believe it is necessary for you to know who I am prior to reading what I believe. God has led me on a unique journey

that has made me the man I am and contributed to how I view His Word.

Just as Paul began his letter to the Philippians by giving his credentials—he was “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5)—I will tell you that I am a Jew, of the tribe of Judah, an Israeli of Israelis. And, also as He did with Paul, God rescued me from depending on the law for my salvation and showed me His marvelous grace.

My father’s family originated many generations ago in the Champagne region of France. In fact, our family name, *Tsarfati*, means “French” in the Hebrew language. Eventually, my ancestors moved on to Portugal. Then, in 1492, while King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain were sending Christopher Columbus off to sail the ocean blue, they also issued the Alhambra Decree, which began the systematic expulsion of Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Soon after, King Manuel I of Portugal got on the bandwagon, and in 1497, all the Jews in his country were given the boot. That was how my father’s family found themselves in Tunisia. After many years in northern Africa, they made their way back home to Israel.

My grandparents on my mother’s side were Polish Jews. As we all know, Poland was not a great place for a Jew to live in the 1940s. Rounded up and sent to Auschwitz, they somehow survived the horror of that concentration camp. After the war, as soon as the opportunity arose, they joined thousands of other survivors on a ship bound for Israel. The British government turned them away, however, and the ship was forced to anchor in Cyprus. That was where my mother was born—a refugee baby just a few hundred miles away from the Promised Land.

Due to circumstances that I will discuss later, I ended up in foster care at a fairly young age. I eventually settled into the home of a man who was a high-ranking officer with the Israeli

police. His son owned a grocery store, and I immediately began working my first job. I was thankful for the roof over my head and for the food in my stomach, but that was all that they gave to me. There was no love there.

When I reached the age of seventeen, my situation began to feel hopeless. I had no real family, no real future and, to top it off, the girl I was in love with did not even know I existed. Suicide was the best option my teenage brain could come up with, so I planned it out. I had the date; I had the bottle of pills. But when the chosen night came, God stopped me. I just could not do it. It was not out of fear or conscience or some great writing in the sky. He had plans for me, and He was not going to let my teenage depression get in the way.

The day after that close call with death, I was a mess. When I was at my lowest, the Lord chose to show Himself to me, and He did it through my best friend from school. As I was talking with my buddy, I suddenly realized that he was actually a Jewish believer in Christ. (I do not use the phrase “Jewish Christian” because most Jews would consider this to be a contradiction in terms. You are either Jewish or you are a Christian; you certainly cannot be both.) How had I missed his faith before? The idea of a Jewish believer was foreign to me, but also very intriguing. When he invited me to his house for lunch, I readily accepted.

I met his family, and they were all very welcoming and loving. I thought, *So this is what a family is supposed to be.* We all sat around the table for the meal, but before I could start eating, everyone began holding hands. The strangest thing I had ever seen then took place: They all started praying. Right there around the table, they were talking to God like He was their best friend. I was blown away. Where was the prayer book? Where was the ritual? Where was the tradition—the ceremony?

Forgetting the food, I started asking questions. “Why are we holding hands?” “How can you just pray off the top of your

head?” “Why do you end all your prayers ‘in the name of Jesus?’” A very nice lady pulled me aside and suggested, “Why don’t you ask God for the answers to your questions?”

I was floored. *Who am I?* I thought. *Why would God listen to me? Doesn’t the Creator God who rules over all things have better things to do than listen to the angry complaints of a suicidal seventeen-year-old?*

That night I could not sleep. So much was churning around in my brain—my past, my future, my family, my faith. Finally, I gave in and decided to follow the woman’s suggestion to pray. The problem was I did not know how. *Do I stand? Do I kneel? Should my eyes be open or closed? Do I speak the words out loud or to myself?* Not knowing what else to do, I took a piece of paper and a pencil and wrote this sentence: “God, if You exist, then show me who Jesus is.” I taped the paper to the wall, knelt in front of it and did my best to pray. I prayed and I waited. I waited and I prayed. No miracle. No Jesus. No nothing. After a time, exhausted, I went to bed.

The next morning, I woke up to go to work. I had been working since I was twelve—before and after school—doing what I could in my foster family’s grocery store. Part of my job early in the mornings was to assemble the various sections of the newspaper to prepare them for selling. As I was putting the parts together, I spotted on one page in big, bold letters the word *Yeshua*, which is the Hebrew name for Jesus. Quickly, I closed the paper back up. I thought I was hallucinating. That woman had said that God would answer my prayers, but . . .

Slowly, I opened the paper, and there again was that wonderful name: *Yeshua*. I was not sure whether to laugh or to cry. As I read the accompanying print, I discovered that for the next two nights a group called Campus Crusade for Christ was going to be showing a film all about Jesus. I thought, *Thank You, Lord. I can’t believe You put together a whole film just for me.*

I will never forget that night. *The Jesus Film* had been shot in Israel, so I was seeing all these places I knew, hearing Old Testament references that I recognized, listening to Jesus speak a language that I spoke. This Jesus who had seemed so far from me now felt unbelievably close. I was overwhelmed. At the end of the film, I gave my life to Christ.

Then, with all the boldness of a new believer who wants nothing more than for everyone else to experience the same amazing change, I went back home and declared to everyone, “You are all sinners!” My foster family kicked me out of the house that very night. After ten years of living with them, my newfound faith was more than they could take. There I was, without a home, without a family, without a job but, for the first time in my life, with hope.

Different friends put me up for a short period until the time came for me to fulfill my mandatory military service. Some go into their mandatory service with a knife between their teeth, ready to fight. They cannot wait to get out there and shoot something. As for me, I just wanted to get it over with. Only the thought that I had a new opportunity to share my faith brought any excitement.

I was sent to the armored corps. The idea of riding around in a cramped tank was not appealing, so I asked if there was anything else I could do. They obliged by sending me to a telecommunications course. I soon took charge of the telecommunications for a tank platoon, which consisted of twelve tanks. While there were probably 72 other things I would rather have been doing with my life, this was not the worst way to fulfill my mandatory time.

Just as I was settling into that job, my hand became paralyzed—a strange and frightening thing for an eighteen-year-old. The doctors diagnosed a benign tumor in my hand, and they removed the tumor. While I was recovering in the hospital, I received a

note saying that I had been selected to go to officer training. I was shocked. Very few are chosen to go through this training process. Yet here I was, singled out for this prestigious opportunity, when I did not even want to be in the military. There had to be some mistake.

When the military tells you to go, however, you go. Soon I found myself out in a desert training facility, figuring that, at any time, someone would realize I did not belong there and send me back. In the meantime, I determined to enjoy it, keep up my Christian witness and learn all I could. They taught weapons, navigation, combat, command skills and intelligence—all the information needed to be a strong officer.

While I was there, I shared the Gospel every chance I got. I knew it could get me into hot water and possibly cost me the opportunity to complete the training. But the change in me had been so dramatic and had given me so much hope for the future that I could not keep it inside. One day I was called into my commander's office. I knew this had to be it. You were only called in to see the commander if you were in trouble or something really bad was about to happen. I went, nervous but relieved. Finally, I would be sent back to the armored corps to finish out my service; then I could carry on with whatever God had in mind for me next. Instead, the commander said, "Tsarfati, we see great potential in you. We think you could go a long way. Just stop your proselytizing." I was so disappointed. I went in thinking I was about to be kicked out; instead, he complimented me.

I graduated and received my commander pin. In other words, I was trained but did not yet have a rank. That would come after completing professional training in an area that would become my specialty. I learned my specialty when I was summoned to the Ministry of Defense. They told me that I had been chosen to be part of an emerging branch of the military called the



Israeli Military Government in the West Bank. I was sent to the Israeli School for Government, where I was taught Islam, Arabic, the culture of the West Bank, Palestinian history and mentality, and how to govern the population effectively. After I completed this training, I finally became an officer.

Having reported to the headquarters in Ramallah, I was asked where I wanted to serve. Most of the officers coming out of training were very gung ho. They wanted to go where they would see the most action. I went in the opposite direction. I was perfectly happy not to see *any* action. Serving my term in a nice, quiet place where I could study my Bible and share my faith sounded like a fine option to me. I asked, “What is the one place nobody else wants to go—and you don’t really do anything?” Immediately, they said, “Jericho.” I said, “Sign me up!”

When I left for Jericho, I was actually pretty excited. I love history; I love the Bible; I did not love my military job. Thus, Jericho sounded like the perfect situation. Little did I know what was just around the political corner.

Six months after I took this assignment, a new governor showed up in Jericho. He was a strange bird. He had belonged to a secret military branch of Israeli intelligence called 504. These were the folks who operated agents in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and anyplace else where we needed a little more information. This man was a spy and an operator of spies, but now he had been promoted out of intelligence and made a governor. There is an old saying, “You can take the man out of the KGB, but you can’t take the KGB out of the man.” The same holds true with members of the 504.

Once the governor settled in, he set out to find someone among his fifty incompetent officers whom he could trust. He settled on me. After running me through some tests—tests I did not even know I was taking—he summoned me to his office. As I stood there, he put a folder on his desk. “You have

two options, Tsarfati,” he said. “You can continue to do nothing, and you’ll end up being nothing. Or you can decide to do something, and you’ll end up being something. If you want to be something, then look in the folder. Just a warning, though—if you read what is inside, you will be the only one in this branch of the military who knows about it. In fact, very few people in the entire country know about it. If you leak the information you read, you’ll be spending a long time in jail. So, what’s it going to be?”

I asked him if I could pray about it. He knew about my faith and said he would give me a few minutes. I was hoping for a few days, but I took advantage of the brief time and asked the Lord for wisdom. Very quickly, it became crystal clear to me that I had to say yes. God had put me in this unique situation for a reason that He understood, even if I did not. While my life may not have been following the path I had laid out for it, I realized that there are times when you simply have to trust God and step through the doors that He opens.

I opened that top secret folder, and inside I found a draft of the “Jericho and Gaza First” chapter of an agreement that would later be christened “The Oslo Accords.” Nobody else had seen this or even knew about it. In fact, it would be months before the Israeli public would find out that, for the first time in history, local Arabs would govern themselves as a “state to be” called Palestine. The full agreement was finally signed at the White House on September 13, 1993, by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Negotiator Mahmoud Abbas with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, PLO Leader Yasser Arafat and President Bill Clinton overseeing the event. Israel had agreed to allow the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, gradually turning over to them the governance of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This may not seem like much to someone who lives outside of

Israel, but in actuality, it was momentous. Jericho had been chosen to be the first city in the history of planet earth to be ruled by Palestinians.

Now, if you are thinking, “Amir, what are you saying? The Palestinians ruled the land of Palestine for centuries before Israel stole it from them,” then just be patient. You will soon come to a chapter where we will discuss the history of the Palestinian people and the naming of the land of “Palestine.”

Here I was—a 21-year-old Jewish believer in Christ and a first lieutenant in the Israeli army who wanted nothing more than to do nothing—suddenly being placed in a position to do something of historic proportions with the whole world watching. We have our plans, and God has His plans. Guess whose plans win out?

Soon Palestinian leaders began to visit our military headquarters. The governor gave me the responsibility of showing them around. None of my fellow military personnel could figure out why they were forced to scramble around cleaning everything up just so some Palestinians in civilian dress could take a tour. I was the only one who knew that it was in preparation for giving the whole thing to them.

Eventually, the plan was fully implemented, and Israel pulled out of Jericho. I was put in charge of building a new camp to the south. The transition of authority in Jericho pursuant to the 1994 Cairo Agreement was one of the best examples of how smoothly things could work between Israel and the Palestinians. Unfortunately, it was pretty much the only good example.

During this transition time, my body betrayed me. I worked too much; I did not eat or sleep. Who had time to waste on food and slumber? One day there was a big meeting between the Palestinian Minister of Finance and the Israeli Minister of Finance, along with four generals. I welcomed them, shook their hands, stumbled back to my office and collapsed. Someone

heard the noise and found me unconscious. People began working on me, trying to get me to respond. I was evacuated by helicopter and taken to the hospital. Because of the hard work of my fellow officers and the grace of God, I am alive today.

After two weeks recovering in the hospital, I returned to my position. By that time, however, it seemed clearer than ever that the military was not where I belonged. Once the time of my mandatory service was up, I left. When I first entered the service, I was clueless as to what God wanted me to do with my life. By the time my service was over, He had made my path perfectly clear.

All the while I had been in Jericho, I was the official tour guide of the camp. I had the opportunity to lead visiting military and political figures around the base and around the town. Soon I became well-known among both the Israelis and the Palestinians as the guy you wanted to lead your tours. Even today, I have many good relationships with Palestinians that began during my time in Jericho. The history, the people, the Bible—all of these caused me to fall in love with the idea of leading people into the beauty, wonder and truth that are found in my country.

As soon as I left military service, I entered the tour-guide program at Hebrew University. After graduating in 1996, I went to Germany to learn the German language. A few years later, I came to America to study theology. It is impossible to understand Israel without understanding the Bible. The two are inseparable.

Having established my career in guiding tours, I began to make many connections with people from the United States and other nations. This led to opportunities to speak to churches in a number of different countries. In 2001, I was invited to speak in the United States. On September 9, I spoke to a church about the coming threat of Islamic terrorism. Based on the number

of tapes sold after the message, it was obvious that nobody really cared.

The next day, September 10, I visited New York City for the first time. As I stood at the top of the World Trade Center, I began thinking about the 1993 bombing in the parking garage that killed six and injured a thousand others. I asked the pastor who was with me, “What’s going to happen if something hits these buildings? If these buildings collapse, they will take blocks of other buildings with them.” The pastor told me that the buildings had been designed to collapse like a stack of cards, and, as we know, the very next day they did just that.

September 11 was a horrific day for America and for the world. Because of my connection with the Israeli military, I learned a lot more about that day than the average American. I was told about plans that had been thwarted on the West Coast. Planes that were about to take off were grounded by the unprecedented, government-ordered air traffic stoppage. These West Coast terrorists, who had not taken into account the different time zones, found themselves without flights. I heard about cars that were stopped while carrying biological weapons, as well as the plans to take out Air Force One using rented Learjet aircraft. That day was terrible—and it could have been so much worse. Unsurprisingly, when I shared the same message on September 12 that I had given on September 9, the response was very different. People were crowded out into the parking lot.

## Where I Stand

All this personal history, all these experiences, all this passion for communicating God’s truth coalesced into a desire to wake up the Church, to warn nonbelievers and to speak of the blessed hope that believers have. That is the genesis of my ministry, Behold Israel. That is my heart and my purpose.

In these pages, you will find God’s biblical truth. You will not find Amir’s truth or some denomination’s truth or some culture’s truth. While I am Jewish and my ethnicity affects the way I see Scripture, a vast majority of my fellow Jews would disagree one-hundred-percent with what is written in these pages. My Jewish heritage is like seasoning on a steak: It does not change the nature of the meat; it just gives it more flavor.

What is contained in this book comes from years of studying Scripture, living in the land of God’s chosen people and teaching about biblical prophecy to tens of thousands of people over nearly two decades. God wants us to know His plans. He has spelled them out very clearly. Dr. Ed Hindson from Liberty University wrote, “Bible prophecy is not written to scare us. It is written to prepare us. God’s Word reveals these future events to assure us that He is in control even when the world appears to be out of control.”<sup>1</sup> As you ready yourself through studying God’s Word in anticipation of Christ’s return to take us home with Him, you will soon discover the joy and wonderful peace that come from trusting completely in a God who loves you and who is going to accomplish His perfect will in your life and in this world.