

The End of All Things... BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY II

**“NOW THE END OF ALL THINGS IS NEAR;
*therefore, be serious and disciplined
for prayer.*”**
1 Peter 4:7

Truth Seekers Fellowship

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What? We **Proclaim Christ** by **warning** all people and **teaching** all people with all wisdom so that we may **present** every person mature in Christ. Toward this goal **we labor**, struggling according to His power that powerfully works in us. [Colossians 1:28-29]

Why? We believe that men and women are eternally transformed as they cultivate a deep personal relationship with Jesus The Messiah (The Living Word) by means of learning the Written Word (The Bible) in the context of our deep relationships within the Body of Christ.

How? **Truth Seekers Fellowship** exists to:

1. **CREATE** Christ-focused, Bible Based studies that promote Life Transformation, not merely information transfer.
2. **DEVELOP** classes, resources and tools around our Milk to Meat strategy of teaching the core elements of the faith with a view to cultivating mature disciples of Christ.
3. **INVEST** in the lives of willing and hungry students in both the “classroom” setting, but even more importantly in smaller “life on life” contexts.

Vision: It is the responsibility of the Body of Christ (The Church) as a whole to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18) and grow them to spiritual maturity in Christ. Truth Seekers Fellowship assists the Body of Christ in the primary ministry sphere of Teaching 1) by offering Christ focused, Biblical instruction and 2) by training and equipping others in the teaching ministry. All of this is done with a view to promoting Oneness in the Body of Christ (John 17:20-21, Ephesians 4:1-6).

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1 Review: What is Eschatology?

Eschatology is the study of Last Things:
the final events in human history,
the destiny of human beings (collectively and individually),
and the Age to Come.

1.1 There are **two basic topics** in the study of Eschatology:

1.1.1 Historical Eschatology:

1.1.2 Personal Eschatology:

1.2 Eschatology is founded on **Prophecy**.

Ultimately, eschatology entails the study of **prophecy**—The Lord-God foretelling people and events of future history (*from the view of the prophet or prophetic word*).

Isaiah 46:7–10

“Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 46:9
remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
46:10 declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,’... {ESV}

2 Why Should We Study Prophecy and Eschatology?

2.1 Studying prophecy and eschatology gives us **Hope**.

Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. {ESV}

Key Definition: Hope is the confident expectation that all things—especially my life—will turn out well because God will be who He promises to be and do what He promises to do.

1 Thessalonians 4:13, 18 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. ... 4:18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

2.2 Studying prophecy and eschatology enables us **to know Jesus** our Lord and Savior more deeply.

2.2.1 ALL The Scriptures testify about Jesus.

John 5:38–40 [Jesus says to those opposed to Him] “You study the Scriptures thoroughly because you think in them you possess eternal life, and it is these same Scriptures that testify about me, 5:40 but you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.” {NET}

2.2.2 In the last prophetic book of the Bible—Revelation—Jesus is the source and content of the revelation.

Revelation 1:1–2 The revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave Him to show His slaves what must quickly take place. He sent it and signified it through His angel to His slave John, 1:2 who testified [*martureo*] to God’s word and to the testimony [*marturia*] about Jesus Christ, in all he saw.

2.2.3 In the final analysis, the testimony from/about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy:

Revelation 19:10 [The angel said to John] “Worship God, because the testimony [*marturia*] about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

- *testimony* = a message, information about a person or an event about which the speaker has direct, personal knowledge. This is the word group (*martureo* [*v*], *marturia* [*n*]) from which our term *martyr* is derived.
- *of or about Jesus* = there is an interpretation issue here since the preposition can be translated as 1) the testimony *of* Jesus, which would mean a message from Jesus, or 2) the testimony *about* Jesus, which would mean a message that tells us something about Jesus. In my view the ambiguity is purposeful. Prophecy is ultimately a message *from* Jesus *about* Jesus! See the passages from Luke 24 below.
- *spirit* = here this is probably a reference to the Holy Spirit inspiring the prophetic word which points to Jesus. Peter touches on this when he says:

1 Peter 1:10–12 Concerning this salvation [Peter has been talking about their ‘great salvation’], the prophets who prophesied about the grace that would come to you searched and carefully investigated. 1:11 They in-

quired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when He testified in advance to the messianic sufferings and the glories that would follow. 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Angels desire to look into these things.

2.2.4 Jesus was foretold in all the Hebrew Scriptures.

Luke 24:25–27 He [Jesus] said to them [the disciples on the road to Emmaus], “How unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken! 24:26 Didn’t the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into His glory?” 24:27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Luke 24:43–45 Then He told them, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 24:45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

- The Law of Moses = Genesis—Deuteronomy
- The Prophets = Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and The Twelve Minor Prophets.
- The Psalms = The Psalms were the first collection in the last division of the Hebrew Bible called The Writings which also included, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles

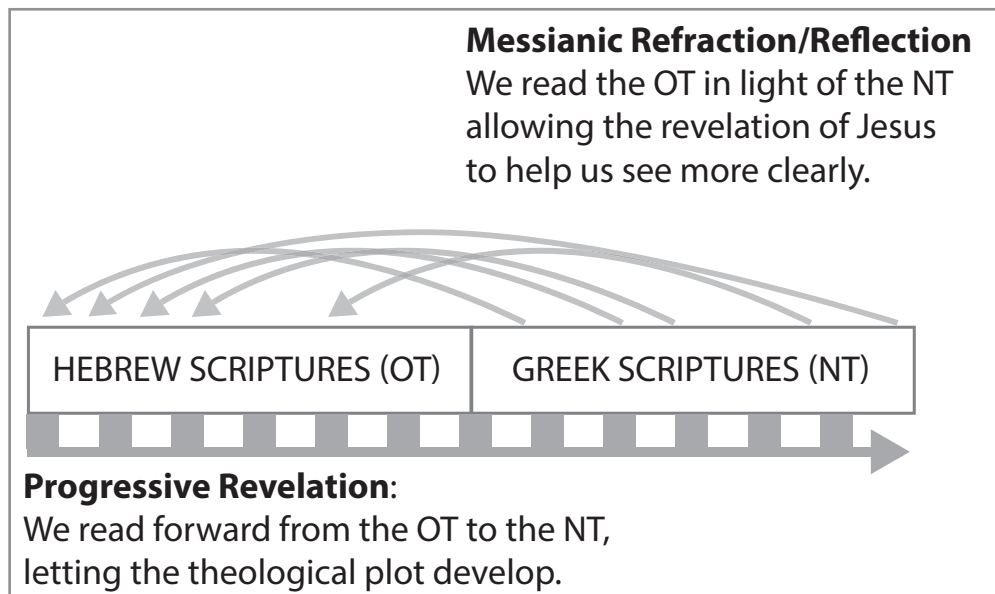
- 2.3 Studying prophecy and eschatology helps us **to know Scripture** more completely and holistically.
- ! If you read through the whole episode in Luke 24, you see an interesting progression:
- **The Scriptures are opened** by Jesus to the disciples on the road to Emmaus so that their hearts burn within them.
 - **The eyes of the disciples are opened** to see and recognize Jesus when He breaks bread with them.
 - **The minds of the disciples are opened** by Jesus to understand The Scriptures.
- 2.4 Studying prophecy and eschatology **enables us to answer the Four, Core Life Questions:**
- 2.4.1 Where did We come from? (Origin)
- 2.4.2 Where are We heading? (Destiny)
This is THE question of Eschatology!!
- 2.4.3 Why are We here? (Purpose)
- 2.4.4 How Should We Live? (Ethics)
- 2.5 Studying prophecy and eschatology **encourages us toward holy living, preparing** for the return of the Lord.
- 2 Peter 3:11–12** Since all these things (the Heavens and the Earth) are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 3:12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the

day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

3 How Will We Study Prophecy and Eschatology

3.1 The Principle of **Progressive Revelation**

3.2 The Principle of **Messianic Refraction/Refocusing**



3.2.1 The Big Picture (*Narrative Mirroring, Chiastic Structure*)

1	ETERNITY (Past)	Eternal Blessing and Fellowship between Father, Son and Spirit
2	CREATION	THE BLESSING The Hope of Perfection and Rest
3	EDEN	The Land of Delight: In the Presence of God
4	THE REBELLION AND FALL	Paradise Lost: The Adversary Becomes "god of this age"; Humanity enslaved
5	THE FLOOD	NOAHIC COVENANT & The Cleansing of the Earth
6	THE BIRTH OF NATIONS	The Nations are Scattered by Languages
7	ABRAHAM AND THE PROMISES	ABRAHAMIC COVENANT The Promise of Blessing After the Curse
8	THE FIRST BORN NATION	SINAI COVENANT The 12 Tribes, The Law, The Conquest
9	THE RISE OF THE KINGDOM	DAVIDIC COVENANT David and The Line of Kings
10	GOD DWELLS IN THE TEMPLE	God Dwells in Israel with His People
11	THE DEMISE OF ISRAEL	The Glory of God Departs
12	THE EXILE OF ISRAEL	Have God's promises failed? The Hope of Redemption: <i>The New Covenant</i>
11'	THE RETURN OF ISRAEL	God Remembers His People and Promises
10'	THE ADVENT OF JESUS	The Glory Returns; God Dwells Among Us in Flesh
9'	THE TEACHING OF JESUS	THE Son of David Reveals the Eternal Kingdom
8'	THE KINGDOM IS PROCLAIMED	The 12 Apostles, The Teaching of Christ, The Commission
7'	THE FULFILLMENT	NEW COVENANT: The Promise is Fulfilled After Christ Takes the Curse
6'	THE NATIONS BLESSED	The Nations (Many languages) are brought near through the Gospel
5'	THE DAY OF THE LORD	The Earth and the Heavens are "shaken" to prepare for the King
4'	THE RETURN OF THE KING (Restoration)	The True King Casts Out The Adversary—"the god of this Age"
3'	THE FUTURE KINGDOM	Paradise Regained, Almost
2'	THE NEW EARTH	The Re-Creation: The Fulfillment of Perfection and Rest
1'	ETERNITY (Future)	Eternal Blessing and Fellowship For the Lord God and His People

7 The Intertestamental Period

After the ministry of the last prophet in the “old testament era” Malachi was completed, there was a period of about 420 years when the Lord was silent and did not lead Israel through the prophetic ministry. This period is generally referred to as the Intertestamental Period - the time between the era of the Old Testament and the era of the New Testament.

Many things happened in this critical period that are important to know in order to understand what is going on historically and culturally as we begin the New Testament and the time of Jesus. We are going to survey some of these key events and developments:

- The **Rule of the Gentiles** in Israel (Daniel foresees this)
- The Spread of **Hellenism** throughout the Western world
- The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek - The **Septuagint** (LXX)
- The Development of “**Synagogue Culture**” within Israel
- The Development of **Rabbinical Judaism**
- The Development of many **sects and factions** within Israel (The Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, etc.)
- The Writing of the **Dead Sea Scrolls**
- The Development of the “**Messianic Hope**” in Israel

7.1 **Daniel 2 & 7: The Kingdoms to Come**

Before we jump into the New Testament, we need to do some work in Daniel because what the Lord reveals there sets the stage for the coming of Jesus. Daniel chapters 2 and 7 reveal the order to Kingdoms that would rule over Israel in the intertestamental period and also into the Latter Days.

The Kingdoms	<i>Symbols in CHAPTER 2</i> THE STATUE	<i>Symbols in CHAPTER 7</i> THE BEASTS
Babylon 605-539 BC	Golden Head	Lion
Medo-Persia 539-331 BC	Silver Chest and Arms	Bear
Greece 331-146 BC	Bronze Belly and Thighs	Leopard
Rome 146 BC – AD 395	Iron Legs and Feet	The Terrible Beast

! We should note that at the end of each of these visions, the coming of the Messianic Kingdom is also foreseen:

Daniel 2:43–45

“In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever. 2:45 You saw a stone break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its interpretation certain.”

Daniel 7:21–27

As I was watching, this horn waged war against the holy ones and was prevailing over them 7:22 until the Ancient of Days arrived and a judgment was given in favor of the holy ones of the

Most High, for the time had come, **and the holy ones took possession of the kingdom.** 7:23 “This is what he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, trample it down, and crush it. 7:24 The 10 horns are 10 kings who will rise from this kingdom. Another, different from the previous ones, will rise after them and subdue three kings. 7:25 He will speak words against the Most High and oppress the holy ones of the Most High. He will intend to change religious festivals and laws, and the holy ones will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half a time. 7:26 But the court will convene, and his dominion will be taken away, to be completely destroyed forever. 7:27 **The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey Him.**’

! This last section is worked out in the Book of Revelation which describes the coming of this “little horn” - the Beast, the Antichrist and his destruction at the return of Christ. We will put all of this together when we get to Revelation.

7.2 **Daniel 7:13-14:** The Messiah will be The Son of Man

Daniel 7:13-14 I continued watching in the night visions, and I saw One like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. 7:14 He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

7.3 **Daniel 9:24-27:** Daniel's Seventy Sevens

Daniel 9:20 While I was still speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and presenting my request before the Lord my God concerning his holy mountain — 9:21 yes, while I was still praying, the man Gabriel whom I had seen previously in a vision was approaching me in my state of extreme weariness, around the time of the evening offering.

- The “time of the evening sacrifice” would have been between 3:00 and 4:00 PM.

9:22 He spoke with me, instructing me as follows:

“Daniel, I have now come to impart understanding to you. 9:23 At the beginning of your requests a message went out, and I have come to convey it to you, for you are a precious treasure. Therefore consider the message and understand the vision:

9:24 “**Seventy sevens/weeks** have been determined

concerning *your people* and *your holy city*

- (1) to finish the transgression,
- (2) to bring sin to completion,
- (3) to atone for iniquity,
- (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness,
- (5) to seal up the prophetic vision,
- (6) and to anoint a most holy place.

9:25 So know and understand: *from the going forth of the message to return and build Jerusalem* until the anointed one, the prince, there are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.

9:26 Now after the sixty-two weeks, the anointed one will be cut off and have nothing. As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood,

until the end of the war that has been decreed, there will be desolations.

9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifice and offering to a halt on the wing of a desolating abomination, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

! ***When is the message given to rebuild and restore?***

1. This could be Cyrus’ proclamation issued in 538/537 BC (II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4 and 6;1-5) which deals mostly with the rebuilding of the Temple.
2. This could be the decree of Darius, given in the year 521 BC (Ezra 6:6-12) which also deals with the Temple.
3. This could be the decree of Artaxerxes I in 458/457 BC (Ezra 7:11-26).
4. This could be the decree of Artaxerxes I in 445/444 BC (Nehemiah 2:5-8)

The issue of setting strict dates for this prophetic timetable is very difficult. No matter which view is taken there are problems to be overcome. In the final analysis there is only two types of views on these “seventy sevens”: 1) these numbers are to be taken as literal periods of time, or 2) they are to be taken as only symbolic and figurative periods of time.

I take the view that these numbers represent literal, historical periods of time. I follow the basic approach of Stephen Miller (*The New American Commentary*) and Gleason L. Archer (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*) who begin this dating with the decree to Ezra given in 458/457 BC. This seems to fit the evidence better than the other two dates.

With the starting date of 458/457 BC we add to it the first period of “sevens” or $7 \times 7 = 49$ years and this would bring us to the date 409/408 BC.

Although this text does not tell us what is supposed to happen around this date it is interesting to note that this is about the time that rebuilding projects of Nehemiah and Ezra were completed in Jerusalem. Miller notes that in the *Elephantine Papyri* another governor had replaced Nehemiah by 407 BC. This makes it possible and probable that Nehemiah’s work was

completed by 409/408 BC (Miller, Daniel, NAC, 266).

To this first set of “sevens,” we now add the other set of 62 “sevens” and come up with 69 weeks of years or 483 years. By adding this to the date 458 we come to the year AD 26/27 (we gain a year moving from BC to AD because there is no year 0). ***This is the time when Jesus would have been baptized by John at the beginning of His ministry!***

- Deciphering the Seventy Sevens

<i>“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city...”</i>	Literally “Seventy sevens” that are meant as “weeks” of years: 1 week = 7 years 70 weeks = 490 years
9:25a <i>“Know then and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be a period of seven weeks and sixty two weeks...”</i>	The word is taken as that of Artaxerxes in 458/457 BC . 7 Sevens (49 years) + 62 Sevens (434 years) for a total of 69 Weeks or 483 years 483 years after 458/457 BC is 26/27 AD which is the time in which Jesus began His public ministry.
9:25b <i>“... It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.</i>	This is probably the time signified by the first period of “sevens” – 7x7 or 49 years. This would be the time between 458/457 BC till 409/408 BC the times in which Ezra and Nehemiah were rebuilding in troubled times

<i>9:26a “Now after the sixty two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing.</i>	<i>This comes after the total 483 years.</i> Jesus’ crucifixion (“being cut off”) took place about 3 years after the beginning of His ministry in AD 30.
<i>As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction.</i>	The later half of this verse speaks to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70.
<i>9:27 He (the prince to come) will confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt. On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.”</i>	The final period of 7 YEARS (The Seventieth Seven) is a period of time yet future and foreseen in Revelation 6-19. <i>The historical events immediately after the life of Christ do not seem to fulfill what is revealed here.</i> Jesus confirms this in Matthew 24 and Mark 14.

The Big Picture of the Seventy Sevens

7 “SEVENS” (49 YEARS)	62 “SEVENS”	SEVENTIETH “SEVEN”
The time in which Ezra and Nehemiah restore Jerusalem	Add to the first 7 “sevens” brings us to the beginning of Christ’s ministry	The final “seven” is the End Times in which Anti-christ comes to power.
(458/457 - 409/408 BC)	(409/408BC - AD 26/27)	(Yet Future)

8 Prophecy in the Psalms

Chart 01 Key Historical Events For Understanding the Psalms				
The Giving of the Torah (c. 1440 BC)	The Davidic Promises (c. 1000 BC)	The Exile of Israel (586-538 BC)	Psalms Compiled	Jesus The Messiah (AD 30)
Foundation	The Promise	Despair > Hope		Fulfillment

Luke 24:43–45 Then he (Jesus) said to them (His disciples), “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and **the Psalms** must be fulfilled.” 24:45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures...

! In the Intertestamental period, I would argue that one of the key theological developments within Israel is the formation of what I call “**The Messianic Hope**.” During this era the hope for *the messiah*—a king to rule in the likeness of David—becomes the hope for **THE Messiah**—the Son of David who would come to rule not just Israel, but all the nations! I would argue that this hope is seen in the very structure and flow of the Psalms themselves.

! *The Psalms are arranged to point to this Messianic Hope.*

**see chart on next page.*

Chart 02 The Structure of the Psalms				
Book 1 1-41	Book 2 42-72	Book 3 73-89	Book 4 90-106	Book 5 107-150
The Way of Torah (Divine Wisdom) is to submit to the Lord's ways and understand how the promises to David affect the World.	The Promises to David will pass to His sons - The Messianic Hope flowers.	It SEEMS that the Lord's ways will fail! The Promises to David have been completely forgotten!	<i>Wait!</i> Moses reminds that the Lord has always been our refuge. The LORD is truly King and He will save.	The Promises given to David will not fail. The LORD will send a Priest/King to lead Israel and the Nations to worship YHWH.

8.1 **Psalm 2:** The Messiah will be the Son of God
Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22; Acts 4:25-28, 13:33; Hebrews 1:5, 5:5

Psalms 2:1–12 [ESV]

2:1 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
2:2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed (Messiah), saying,
2:3 “Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”

2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
2:5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
2:6 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

2:7 I (The King/Messiah) will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
2:8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,

and the ends of the earth your possession.

2:9 You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

2:10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

2:11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him. [ESV]

8.2 **Psalms 16:8-11:** The Messiah will not be abandoned to the Grave:
Acts 2:22-32, 13:35-37

8.3 **Psalms 22:** The Messiah will be forsaken, pierced, and vindicated:
Matthew 27:39, 27: 43-44, 27:46; Mark 15:34; John 19:24; Hebrews 2:12

8.4 **Psalms 72:1-17:** The Extent of Messiah's rule.

Psalms 72:1-20 *for Solomon*

72:1 God, give Your justice to the king
and Your righteousness to the king's son.

72:2 He will judge Your people with righteousness
and Your afflicted ones with justice.

72:3 May the mountains bring prosperity to the people
and the hills, righteousness.

72:4 May he vindicate the afflicted among the people,
help the poor, and crush the oppressor.

72:5 May he continue while the sun endures
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

72:6 May he be like rain that falls on the cut grass,
like spring showers that water the earth.

72:7 May the righteous flourish in his days
and prosperity abound until the moon is no more.

72:8 May he rule from sea to sea
and from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth.

72:9 May desert tribes kneel before him
and his enemies lick the dust.

72:10 May the kings of Tarshish and the coasts and islands bring tribute,
the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.

72:11 **Let all kings bow down to him,
all nations serve him.**

72:12 For he will rescue the poor who cry out
and the afflicted who have no helper.

72:13 He will have pity on the poor and helpless
and save the lives of the poor.

72:14 He will redeem them from oppression and violence,
for their lives are precious in his sight.

72:15 May he live long! May gold from Sheba be given to him.
May prayer be offered for him continually,
and may he be blessed all day long.

72:16 May there be plenty of grain in the land;
may it wave on the tops of the mountains.
May its crops be like Lebanon.
May people flourish in the cities like the grass of the field.

72:17 May his name endure forever;
as long as the sun shines, may his fame increase.
May all nations be blessed by him and call him blessed.

72:18 May the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does wonders, be praised.

72:19 May His glorious name be praised forever;
the whole earth is filled with His glory. Amen and amen.

72:20 *The prayers of David son of Jesse are concluded.*

- 8.5 **Psalm 110:** The Messiah will supersede David!
Matthew 22:42-25; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34-36;
1 Corinthians 15:25-28; Hebrews 1:3,1:13, 4:14-5:10

Psalms 110 A Davidic psalm.

110:1 This is the declaration of the Lord to my Lord:

“Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

110:2 The Lord will extend Your mighty scepter from Zion.

Rule over Your surrounding enemies.

110:3 Your people will volunteer on Your day of battle.

In holy splendor, from the womb of the dawn,
the dew of Your youth belongs to You.

110:4 The Lord has sworn an oath and will not take it back:

“Forever, You are a priest like Melchizedek.”

110:5 The Lord is at Your right hand;

He will crush kings on the day of His anger.

110:6 He will judge the nations, heaping up corpses;

He will crush leaders over the entire world.

110:7 He will drink from the brook by the road;

therefore, He will lift up His head.

- 8.6 **Psalm 118:** The Messiah, the Cornerstone will be rejected,
but acclaimed:
Matthew 21:42, 21:9; Mark 11:9-10, 12:10-11, 20:17-18; Luke 13:35,
19:38; Acts 4:9-12; John 12:13; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6-8

Psalms 118:1–29

118:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

His faithful love endures forever.

118:2 Let Israel say, “His faithful love endures forever.”

118:3 Let the house of Aaron say, “His faithful love endures forever.”

118:4 Let those who fear the LORD say, “His faithful love endures forever.”

118:5 I called to the LORD in distress;
the LORD answered me and put me in a spacious place.

118:6 The LORD is for me; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

118:7 The LORD is my helper,
Therefore, I will look in triumph on those who hate me.

118:8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

118:9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in nobles.

118:10 All the nations surrounded me;
in the name of Yahweh I destroyed them...

118:14 The LORD is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation....

118:17 I will not die, but I will live and proclaim what the LORD has
done. 118:18 The LORD disciplined me severely
but did not give me over to death....

118:22 **The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.**

118:23 This came from the LORD; it is wonderful in our eyes.

118:24 This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

118:25 LORD, save us! LORD, please grant us success!

118:26 He who comes in the name of the LORD is blessed.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.

118:27 The LORD (YHWH) is God and has given us light.
Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

118:28 You are my God, and I will give You thanks.
You are my God; I will exalt You.

118:29 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.

9 Prophecy in The Gospels and Acts

9.1 The Early Life of Jesus and Key Prophetic Texts

In the Gospels, much emphasis is given to Jesus fulfilling specific prophecies about Him from the Hebrew Scriptures. These fulfillments are very important for 1) establishing the trustworthiness of Scripture, and 2) verifying Jesus' identity as The Seed of Abraham and the Son of David—the foundational promises from the OT which shape the identity of The Messiah.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,
the son of David, the son of Abraham. (ESV)

I have decided not to cover all the ways that Jesus fulfilled prophecy in His earthly ministry. There are many online and print resources which will give lists of these texts and fulfillments.

Instead, we will look at a few key texts which have significance for the events of the Last Days and End Times.

9.1.1 The Birth of John The Baptizer is foretold

The announcement of the birth of John is a significant link between the OT and NT:

Luke 1:13–17 But the angel said to him:

Do not be afraid, Zechariah,
because your prayer has been heard.
Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,
and you will name him John.

1:14 There will be joy and delight for you,
and many will rejoice at his birth.

1:15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord

and will never drink wine or beer.
 He will be filled with the Holy Spirit
 while still in his mother's womb.

1:16 He will turn many of the sons of Israel
 to the Lord their God.

1:17 And he will go before Him
 in the spirit and power of Elijah,
 to turn the hearts of fathers
 to their children,
 and the disobedient
 to the understanding of the righteous,
 to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

! The announcement to Zechariah recalls the last words of the last prophet Malachi:

Malachi 4:4–6 4:4 “Remember the instruction of Moses My servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. 4:5 Look, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the Lord comes. 4:6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

9.1.2 The announcement of Jesus' Conception and Birth:

Luke 1:30–38 Then the angel told her (Mary):

Do not be afraid, Mary,
 for you have found favor with God.

1:31 Now listen:

You will conceive and give birth to a son,
 and you will call His name Jesus.

1:32 He will be great

and will be called the Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.
1:33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and His kingdom will have no end.

1:34 Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?”

1:35 The angel replied to her:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore, the holy One to be born
will be called the Son of God.

1:36 And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. 1:37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 1:38 “I am the Lord’s slave,” said Mary. “May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel left her.

! Notice the emphasis on the throne of David (Davidic Promises and Covenant) and the House of Jacob (Abrahamic Promises and Covenant)

9.1.3 Mary’s Song

Luke 1:46–55 And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
1:47 and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,
1:48 because He has looked with favor on the humble condition of His slave. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,
1:49 because the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and His name is holy.
1:50 His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him.
1:51 He has done a mighty deed with His arm;

He has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts;
 1:52 He has toppled the mighty from their thrones
 and exalted the lowly.
 1:53 He has satisfied the hungry with good things
 and sent the rich away empty.
 1:54 He has helped His servant Israel, mindful of His mercy,
 1:55 just as He spoke to our ancestors,
 to Abraham and his descendants forever.

! Notice that although many of the things Mary mentions have not actually happened yet, she states them as *a past fact* through faith.

9.1.4 Zechariah's Song

Luke 1:67–79 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

1:68 Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
 because He has visited
 and provided redemption for His people.
 1:69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
 in the house of His servant David,
 1:70 just as He spoke by the mouth
 of His holy prophets in ancient times;
 1:71 salvation from our enemies
 and from the clutches of those who hate us.
 1:72 He has dealt mercifully with our fathers
 and remembered His holy covenant—
 1:73 the oath that He swore to our father Abraham.
 He has given us the privilege,
 1:74 since we have been rescued

from our enemies' clutches,
to serve Him without fear
1:75 in holiness and righteousness
in His presence all our days.
1:76 And child, you will be called
a prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord
to prepare His ways,
1:77 to give His people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins.
1:78 Because of our God's merciful compassion,
the Dawn from on high will visit us
1:79 to shine on those who live in darkness
and the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

9.2 What Did Jesus Teach on Prophecy?

9.2.1 The Kingdom is "At Hand"

Mark 1:14–15 After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, preaching the good news of God: 1:15 "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!"

! The reality of The Kingdom is present all throughout Scripture and is a vitally important truth to understand as it gives context to everything. In Matthew, Jesus calls it, "the Kingdom of Heaven (lit. *the Heavens*)."

Here in Mark, and in Luke and John, it is The Kingdom of God. Paul refers to the "Kingdom of Christ/ the Messiah and God" (Ephesians 5:5) and the "Kingdom of the Beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13). Peter speaks of the "eternal

kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:11).
Finally, Revelation foresees the day when “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15).

The coming of the Kingdom is a reality that cannot be stopped or avoided. The New Testament especially warns us about this so that we can be prepared.

Jesus also refers to an aspect of the Kingdom as “the regeneration” - a time when the world is “reborn”:

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in **the regeneration** when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (NASB)

Peter speaks about times of “refreshing” and “restoring” that will accompany the coming of Christ and the Kingdom (Acts 3:20-21).

9.2.2 Jesus foretells the building of His Church

Matthew 16:13–21 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 16:14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

16:15 “But you,” He asked them, “who do you say that I am?”

16:16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,
the Son of the living God!”

16:17 And Jesus responded, “Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven. 16:18

And I also say to you that you are Peter, **and on this rock I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it.**

16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven.”

16:20 And He gave the disciples orders to tell no one that He was the Messiah. 16:21 From then on Jesus began to point out to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.

! **The Church and Israel** | One of the major issues that we will be dealing with in this study is the nature of The Church and its relationship to Israel. In our times, there are some (Covenant-Reformed theologians) who see The Church as the fulfillment of the Lord’s plans for Israel and therefore The Church and Israel are merged. This is often called “replacement theology.”

In this tradition of thought, the Church is “Spiritual Israel.” In this view, the Church is read back into the OT and some will say that the Church started with Abraham. This view also sees no future plans and purposes for national, ethnic Israel - all will be fulfilled to the Jews who are part of The Church.

Other traditions (Dispensationalists and others) do not see The Church and Israel merged, but keep them distinct in the Lord’s plans and purposes. In this view, the Lord will work in the future with national, ethnic Israel.

In my thinking, this passage is a key piece of information in dealing with this issue. Here Jesus seems to be saying that He *will build* (future tense) His Church seeming to indicate that it is not already in existence. We will be talking about this issue more as we get into the Letters of the NT.

Matthew 26:26–29

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” 26:27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, 26:28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 26:29 **I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.**”

! Jesus anticipates the joy and reunion that will take place when the Kingdom comes. Wine is one of the great symbols of the joy and blessedness of the Kingdom in the OT: Isaiah 25:6; Jeremiah 31:12; Joel 2:19-24, 3:18; Amos 9:13

Isaiah 25:6–8 25:6

On this mountain (Renewed Zion) the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, **a feast of well-aged wine**, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. 25:7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. 25:8 He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

Amos 9:13–14 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; **the mountains shall drip sweet wine**, and all the hills shall flow with it. 9:14 I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.

9.3 Jesus' Prophecy on the Mount of Olives (The Olivet Discourse) (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13:1-27; Luke 21:5-36)

9.3.1 The Question of the Temple and the End of the Age

Matthew 24:1–35	Mark 13:1–31	Luke 21:6–28
24:1 As Jesus left and was going out of the temple complex, His disciples came up and called His attention to the temple buildings. 24:2 Then He replied to them, “Don’t you see all these things? I assure you: Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down!”	13:1 As He was going out of the temple complex, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, look! What massive stones! What impressive buildings!” 13:2 Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down!”	21:6 “These things that you see—the days will come when not one stone will be left on another that will not be thrown down!”
24:3 While He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached Him privately and said, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what is the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?”	13:3 While He was sitting on the Mount of Olives across from the temple complex, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 13:4 “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when all these things are about to take place?”	21:7 “Teacher,” they asked Him, “so when will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”

! In Matthew 24:3 the word that is translated “coming” is the Greek term ***parousia***. This is a significant term relating to the return of Jesus in the Last Days.

We will be following a trail of passages that are bound together by the use of this term. If you want to gain some insight into this term you can find it in the following passages: Matt 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor 15:23; 16:17; 2 Cor 7:6–7; 10:10; Phil 1:26; 2:12; 1 Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Th 2:1, 8–9; James 5:7–8; 2 Pet 1:16; 3:4, 12; 1 John 2:28. *Not all of these passage have to do with Jesus but they are all instructive on the sense of the word.*

! The Questions Jesus answers:

9.3.2 Jesus warns against deception by false Messiahs

Matthew	Mark	Luke
<p>24:4 Then Jesus replied to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 24:5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and they will deceive many. 24:6 You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet. 24:7 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 24:8 All these events are the beginning of birth pains.</p>	<p>13:5 Then Jesus began by telling them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 13:6 Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and they will deceive many. 13:7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don’t be alarmed; these things must take place, but the end is not yet. 13:8 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.</p>	<p>21:8 Then He said, “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Don’t follow them. 21:9 When you hear of wars and rebellions, don’t be alarmed. Indeed, these things must take place first, but the end won’t come right away.” 21:10 Then He told them: “Nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 21:11 There will be violent earthquakes, and famines and plagues in various places, and there will be terrifying sights and great signs from heaven.</p>

9.3.3 Jesus warns about the coming Persecution

Matthew	Mark	Luke
<p>24:9 “Then they will hand you over for persecution, and they will kill you. You will be hated by all nations because of My name.</p> <p>24:10 Then many will take offense, betray one another and hate one another.</p> <p>24:11 Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.</p> <p>24:12 Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold.</p> <p>24:13 But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.</p>	<p>13:9 “But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to sanhedrins (councils), and you will be flogged in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of Me, as a witness to them.</p> <p>13:10 And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations.</p> <p>13:11 So when they arrest you and hand you over, don’t worry beforehand what you will say. On the contrary, whatever is given to you in that hour—say it. For it isn’t you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>13:12 Then brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and put them to death.</p> <p>13:13 And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.</p>	<p>21:12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you. They will hand you over to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of My name.</p> <p>21:13 It will lead to an opportunity for you to witness.</p> <p>21:14 Therefore make up your minds not to prepare your defense ahead of time,</p> <p>21:15 for I will give you such words and a wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.</p> <p>21:16 You will even be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will kill some of you.</p> <p>21:17 You will be hated by everyone because of My name,</p> <p>21:18 but not a hair of your head will be lost.</p> <p>21:19 By your endurance gain your lives.</p>

! **Persecution** | The theme of persecution shows up in all of this versions of Jesus’ teaching. We will take special note of the use of this term (*Thlipsis*) in Matthew 24:21. This is also a word worth studying: Matt 13:21; 24:9, 21, 29; Mark 4:17; 13:19, 24; John 16:21, 33; Acts 7:10–11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; Rom 2:9; 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 Cor 7:28; 2 Cor 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2, 13; Eph 3:13; Phil 1:17; 4:14; Col 1:24; 1 Th 1:6; 3:3, 7; 2 Th 1:4, 6; Heb 10:33; James 1:27; Rev 1:9; 2:9–10, 22; 7:14

9.3.4 Jesus foretells the preaching of the Gospel to the Nations

Matthew	Mark	Luke
24:14 This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come.		

! This passage has often been used to argue that the Lord will not return until His people take the Gospel to the whole world. However, it may be that this is actually fulfilled by an angel as foreseen in Revelation:

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, having the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people.

9.3.5 Jesus foretells the “Abomination of Desolation”:

Matthew	Mark	Luke
24:15–22 “So when you see the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place” (let the reader understand), 24:16 “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! 24:17 A man on the house-top must not come down to get things out of his house. 24:18 And a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes. 24:19 Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! 24:20 Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.	13:14–23 “When you see the abomination that causes desolation standing where it should not” (let the reader understand), “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! 13:15 A man on the house-top must not come down or go in to get anything out of his house. 13:16 And a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes. 13:17 Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! 13:18 Pray it won’t happen in winter.	21:20–22 “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that its desolation has come near. 21:21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! Those inside the city must leave it, and those who are in the country must not enter it, 21:22 because these are days of vengeance to fulfill all the things that are written. 21:23 Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, and wrath against this people.

! **Luke’s Unique Version:** “When you see Jerusalem surrounded”

! **The Abomination** | This is a clear reference to Daniel 9:27 and the message of the Seventy-Sevens that we considered earlier. This is an important “mile marker” in the events of the end times.

Daniel 9:27 “And he (the coming prince - Antichrist) will make a firm covenant with the many for one [seven], but in the middle of the [seve] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” NASB

From this we know that the Abomination will take place in the middle of the final Seven year period of Daniel’s 70-Sevens. It also corresponds to the other references to “time, times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25), “42 Months” (Revelation 13:5) and “1260 days” (Revelation 11:3, 12:6) that appear in similar contexts.

Daniel’s 70th - Seven (final 7-year period)	
The Abomination of Desolation	
	⇓
	“Time, times and Half a time” 42 Months - 1260 Days 3 1/2 Years
	<i>...then there will be a great tribulation</i>

9.3.6 Jesus foretells a time of Great Tribulation/Suffering

Matthew	Mark	Luke
24:21 For at that time there will be great tribulation , the kind that hasn’t taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again! 24:22 Unless those days were limited, no one would survive. But those days will be limited because of the elect.	13:19 For those will be days of tribulation , the kind that hasn’t been from the beginning of the world, which God created, until now and never will be again! 13:20 Unless the Lord limited those days, no one would survive. But He limited those days because of the elect, whom He chose.	21:21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! Those inside the city must leave it, and those who are in the country must not enter it, 21:22 because these are days of vengeance to fulfill all the things that are written. 21:23 Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, and wrath against this people.

! **Great tribulation:**

9.3.7 Jesus foretells the “times of the Gentiles.”

Matthew	Mark	Luke
		21:24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

! The Times of the Gentiles?

9.3.8 Jesus warns about false Messiahs again.

Matthew	Mark	Luke
24:23 “If anyone tells you then, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Over here!’ do not believe it! 24:24 False messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 24:25 Take note: I have told you in advance. 24:26 So if they tell you, ‘Look, He’s in the wilderness!’ don’t go out; ‘Look, He’s in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it.	13:21 “Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah! Look—there!’ do not believe it! 13:22 For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 13:23 And you must watch! I have told you everything in advance.	

9.3.9 Jesus gives two short figures about His Appearing

Matthew	Mark	Luke
<p>24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming (<i>parousia</i>) of the Son of Man.</p> <p>24:28 Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will gather.</p>		

9.3.10 Jesus foretells the Signs in the Heavens at the End:

Matthew	Mark	Luke
<p>24:29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days:</p> <p>The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the celestial powers will be shaken.</p>	<p>13:24 “But in those days, after that tribulation:</p> <p>The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; 13:25 the stars will be falling from the sky, and the celestial powers will be shaken.</p>	<p>21:25 “Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring sea and waves.</p> <p>21:26 People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the world, because the celestial powers will be shaken.</p>

! Consistently throughout Scripture, these signs accompany the return of Christ.

! The Celestial Powers:

9.3.11 Jesus foretells the “sign” of His Appearing

Matthew	Mark	Luke
<p>24:30 “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.</p> <p>24:31 He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.</p>	<p>13:26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 13:27 He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.</p>	<p>21:27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.</p> <p>21:28 But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near!”</p>

- ! The “**Sign**” of the Son of Man in Matthew seems to be His appearing with the clouds in power and glory.
- ! The **Gathering** of the Elect/Chosen - Who is This?

9.4 A Basic Sequence of End-Time Events based on Jesus’ teaching:

1. Many deceivers and false Messiahs will appear.
2. Wars, famines and earthquakes are the beginnings of “birth pains.”
3. Trouble and persecutions will come for Jesus’ people - they will be hated for His Name’s sake.
4. The Gospel will be proclaimed to the Nations
5. The Abomination of Desolation
6. The Great Tribulation/Suffering

7. Jerusalem will be trampled until the Times of the Gentiles is fulfilled.
8. The Signs in the Heavens
9. The Appearing of Jesus - The Son of Man
10. The Gathering of the Elect/Chosen

9.5 The Parables of Preparation

9.5.1 The Lesson of the Fig Tree:

Matthew 24:32–44

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree:

As soon as its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. 24:33 In the same way, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near—at the door!

24:34 I assure you: This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take place. 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

9.5.2 No One Knows the Day or the Hour...

Matthew 24:36 “Now concerning that day and hour no one knows—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son—except the Father only.

9.5.3 The Days of Noah > The Arrival of the Son of Man

Matthew 24:37

As the days of Noah were, so the **coming** (*parousia*) of the Son of Man will be. 24:38 For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until

the day Noah boarded the ark. 24:39 They didn't know until the flood came and swept them all away. So this is the way the **coming** (*parousia*) of the Son of Man will be: 24:40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one left. 24:41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one left.

9.5.4 Be Alert!

Matthew 24:42 Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming. 24:43 But know this: If the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house be broken into. 24:44 This is why you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

- The Parable of the Faithful Servant/Slave (Matthew 24:45-51) emphasizes doing the will of the Master till He returns.
- The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) emphasizes preparing for the Groom's arrival, always being alert.
- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) emphasizes working faithfully and shrewdly until the Master returns.
- The instruction about the "Sheep and Goat" Judgment gives revelation on the judging of the Nations. *We will consider this later when we get to the Judgments to come.*

9.6 Prophecy in Acts

9.6.1 The Kingdom is still in focus:

Acts 1:1–9 I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach 1:2 until the day He was taken up, after He had given orders through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. 1:3 After He had suffered, He also presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and **speaking about the kingdom of God.**

1:4 While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "This," He said, "is what you heard from Me; 1:5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

1:6 So when they had come together, they asked Him, "**Lord, are You restoring the Kingdom to Israel at this time?**"

1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

1:9 After He had said this, He was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took Him out of their sight.

! It is important to note that the disciples were still expecting a restoration of the Kingdom to Israel!

! It is also important to note that the Apostles preach and teach on the Kingdom all throughout Acts. See Acts 8:12, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31

Acts 28:30–31 Then he (Paul) stayed two whole years in his own rented house. And he welcomed all who visited him, 28:31 **proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ** with full boldness and without hindrance.

9.6.2 The way of Jesus' return in foretold:

Acts 1:10–11 While He was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. 1:11 They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? **This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen Him going into heaven.**”

9.6.3 Peter links the past promises with future Hope:

Acts 3:11–26 While he (the lame man at the Beautiful Gate in the Temple) was holding on to Peter and John, all the people, greatly amazed, ran toward them in what is called Solomon's Colonnade.

3:12 When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us, as though we had made him walk by our own power or godliness? 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. 3:14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you. 3:15 You killed the source of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this. 3:16 By faith in His name, His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Him has given him this perfect health in front of all of you. 3:17 “And now, brothers, I know that you did it in ignorance, just as your leaders also did. 3:18 But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets—that His Messiah would suffer—He has fulfilled in this way.

3:19 Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, **that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord**, 3:20 and that He may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah. 3:21 **Heaven must welcome Him until the times of the restoration of all things**, which God spoke about by the mouth of His

holy prophets from the beginning. 3:22 Moses said:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He will say to you.

3:23 And everyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from the people.

3:24 “In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also announced these days. 3:25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring. 3:26 God raised up His Servant and sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways.”

9.6.4 Paul warns of the future judgment of the world:

Acts 17:30–32 ...“Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, 17:31 **because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed.** He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

! This one statement draws together several truths that have been developing up to this point:

1. A Day of Judgment has been set - it is coming
2. the *whole world* will be judged
3. the standard of judgment will be righteousness - *thinking and doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, with the right motives.*
4. Jesus has been appointed to be the judge -
“The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all people will honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” (John 5:22-23)

10 Prophecy in The Letters of the New Testament

As we move into the letters of the New Testament, we will continue to follow our principle of *Progressive Revelation* but with a few modifications. We will consider where the writings fit in *chronological* order but we will also group **key topics** together to see how these topics develop through the composition of the NT. There is debate over the dating of some of the letters which makes a universally accepted timeline impossible. Nevertheless, we will put the letters in an order that most conservatives would consider plausible.

Below is a general chronology of the events of the New Testament era adapted from the ESV Study Bible.

33/34*	Paul witnesses the resurrected Lord on the way to Damascus and is commissioned as an apostle to the nations (Acts 9; Gal. 1:15–16).
34–37	Paul ministers in Damascus and Arabia (Acts 9:19–22; 26:20; Gal. 1:16–18).
36	Pilate loses his position for incompetence.
36/37*	Paul meets with Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26–30; Gal. 1:18).
37–45	Paul ministers in Syria, Tarsus, and Cilicia (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21).
38*	Peter witnesses to Cornelius (Acts 10).
39	Antipas is exiled.
40–45*	James writes his letter to believers outside Palestine (see James 1:1).
41–44	Agrippa, Herod the Great's grandson, rules Palestine; he kills James the brother of John (Acts 12:2) and imprisons Peter (Acts 12:3).
42–44	Paul receives his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7).
44	Peter leaves Jerusalem; Agrippa is killed by an "angel of the Lord" (Acts 12:23).
44–46	Theudas persuades many Jews to sell their possessions and follow him into the wilderness where he claimed he would miraculously divide the Jordan River; Roman procurator Fadus dispatches his cavalry and beheads the would-be messiah.
44–47*	Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem; time of famine (Acts 11:27–30; Gal. 2:1–10).
46–47	Paul's First Missionary Journey (with Barnabas) from Antioch to Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra (Acts 13:4–14:26).

46–48	Roman procurator Tiberius Alexander crucifies two sons (Jacob and Simon) of Judas the Galilean.
48*	Paul writes Galatians , perhaps from Antioch (see Acts 14:26–28).
48–49*	Paul and Peter return to Jerusalem for The Apostolic Council, which, with the assistance of James, frees Gentile believers from the requirement of circumcision in opposition to Pharisaic believers (Acts 15:1–29); Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (Acts 15:30) but split over a dispute about John Mark (Acts 15:36–40).
48/49–51*	Paul's Second Missionary Journey (with Silas) from Antioch to Syria, Cilicia, southern Galatia, Macedonia, notably Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea; and then on to Achaia, notably Athens and Corinth (Acts 15:36–18:22).
49	Claudius expels Jews from Rome because of conflicts about Jesus (Acts 18:2); Paul befriends two refugees, Priscilla and Aquila, in Corinth (Acts 18:2–3).
49–51*	Paul writes 1–2 Thessalonians from Corinth (Acts 18:1, 11; also see Acts 18:5 with 1 Thess. 1:8).
51	Paul appears before Gallio, proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12–17).
50–54*	Peter comes to Rome.
52–57*	Paul's Third Missionary Journey from Antioch to Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus, Macedonia, Greece (Acts 18:23–21:17).
52–55	Paul ministers in Ephesus (Acts 19:1–20).
53–55*	Mark writes his Gospel, containing Peter's memories of Jesus; perhaps within a decade, Matthew publishes his Gospel, which relies on Mark and other sources. Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (Acts 19:10).
54	Claudius dies (edict exiling Jews repealed); Priscilla and Aquila return to Rome and host a church in their home (see Rom. 16:3–5).
54–68	Nero reigns.
55–56*	Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Macedonia (Acts 20:1, 3; 2 Cor. 1:16; 2:13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2, 4; see 1 Cor. 16:5).
57*	Paul winters in Corinth and writes Romans (Acts 20:3; see Rom. 16:1–2; also see Rom. 16:23 with 1 Cor. 1:14); travels to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1–16), visits with James the brother of Jesus (Acts 21:17–26), and is arrested (Acts 21:27–36; 22:22–29).
57–59	Paul is imprisoned and transferred to Caesarea (Acts 23:23–24, 33–34).
60	Paul begins voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1–2); he is shipwrecked for three months on the island of Malta (Acts 27:39–28:10).
60–70*	Letter to the Hebrews is written.

62	James the brother of the Lord is executed by order of the Sadducean high priest Ananus.
62–63*	Peter writes his first letter (1 Peter) from Rome (1 Pet. 5:13).
62*	Paul arrives in Rome and remains under house arrest (Acts 28:16–31); he writes Ephesians (see verses for Colossians), Philippians (Phil. 1:7, 13, 17; 4:22), Colossians (Col. 4:3, 10, 18; see Acts 27:2 with Col. 4:10), Philemon (see Philem. 23 with Col. 1:7; Philem. 2 with Col. 4:17; Philem. 24 with Col. 4:10; also see Col. 4:9). Luke, Paul's physician and companion (see Col. 4:14), writes Luke and Acts .
62–64	Paul is released, extends his mission (probably reaching Spain), writes 1 Timothy from Macedonia (see 1 Tim. 1:3) and Titus from Nicopolis (Titus 3:12); he is rearrested in Rome (2 Tim. 1:16–17).
63–64	Work on the temple complex is completed.
64 (July 19)	Fire in Rome; Nero blames and kills many Christians.
64–67*	Peter writes his second letter (2 Peter). Jude writes his letter. Paul writes 2 Timothy (see 2 Tim. 4:6–8). Paul and Peter are martyred in Rome.
66	First Jewish-Roman War begins with a riot between Greeks and Jews at Caesarea; Roman procurator Gesius Florus (a.d. 64–66) is murdered and a Roman garrison wiped out; Menahem, son or grandson of Judas the Galilean, murders the high priest Ananias and seizes control of the temple; Nero dispatches Vespasian with three legions.
67*	Romans destroy the Qumran community, who beforehand hid the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls in nearby caves; the church in Jerusalem flees to Pella (Matt. 24:15–16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20–22); John migrates to Ephesus with Mary, Jesus' mother.
68	Nero commits suicide; year of the three emperors.
69	Rebellion quelled in Galilee and Samaria; Vespasian summoned back to Rome to become emperor.
70 (Aug. 30)	Titus, Vespasian's son, after a five-month siege of Jerusalem, destroys the temple after desecrating it; the temple's menorah, Torah, and veil are removed and later put on display in a victory parade in Rome; the influence of the Sadducees ends; the Pharisee Johanan ben Zakkai escapes and convinces the Romans to allow him and others to settle in Jamnia, where they found a school.
73 (May 2)*	Before Roman general Silva breaches the fortress atop Masada following a two-year siege, 936 Jewish rebels commit suicide.
77–78	Josephus publishes Jewish War in Rome.

79	Pompeii and Herculaneum are destroyed by eruption of Vesuvius; Pliny the Elder dies attempting to investigate.
81	The Arch of Titus , celebrating his destruction of the temple, is erected in Rome.
81–96	Domitian , Titus's brother, persecutes Christians among the Roman nobility, including his own relatives Clemens and Domitilla.
85–95*	John writes his letters (1–3 John), probably in Ephesus.
89–95*	John writes his Gospel, probably in Ephesus.
93–94	Josephus publishes Jewish Antiquities in Rome.
94	Domitian exiles philosophers from Rome.
95*	Amidst persecution, Clement, a leader in the Roman church, writes his Letter to the Corinthians (1 Clement) appealing for peace between the young men and elders.
95–96*	Exiled by Domitian to Patmos, John writes Revelation (Rev. 1:9).
96–98	Nerva, the first of five “good” emperors, ends official persecution.

10.1 James

James focuses on the practical and faithful outworking of faith in the present. He is not particularly concerned with the events of the Last Days and End Times. He does end his letter expressing the constant hope that we see throughout the NT - the Lord Jesus is returning as the righteous Judge:

James 5:7–9 Therefore, brothers, be patient until **the Lord's coming** (*parousia*). See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 5:8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, **because the Lord's coming** (*parousia*) **is near**.

5:9 Brothers, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!

! Did the faithful of the NT era believe that the return of Jesus was near, even imminent?

10.2 **Galatians**

Like James, there is nothing in Galatians which directly addresses the Last Days. However, there is the underlying truth that the Lord will eventually set all things right and judge all things so we must persevere in that knowledge.

10.3 **1 & 2 Thessalonians**

At the heart of these two letters are issues related to the return/appearing of Christ, our being gathered to be with Him, and the Day of the Lord.

10.3.1 **Hope** is the primary motivation for all other virtues.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–4 We always thank God for all of you, remembering you constantly in our prayers. 1:3 We recall, in the presence of our God and Father, your work of faith, labor of love, **and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ**, 1:4 knowing your election, brothers loved by God.

10.3.2 We wait for Jesus who will rescue us from the coming wrath.

1 Thessalonians 1:8–10 For the Lord's message rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place that your faith in God has gone out. Therefore, we don't need to say anything, 1:9 for they themselves report what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 1:10 **and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.**

10.3.3 God calls us into His Kingdom and Glory

1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 As you know, like a father with his own children, 2:12 we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you to walk worthy of God, **who calls you into His own Kingdom and Glory.**

! **Controversial Point: The Nature of the Kingdom**

The nature and reality of The Kingdom is one of the most controversial topics in Biblical Theology.

! Interesting note: the term “church” (*ekklesia*) is used 111 times in the NT; “kingdom” (*basileia*) is used 154 times.

! By the end of the Gospels, although Jesus has preached a kingdom that is “at hand, near” it is clear that The Kingdom will not come in full glory until the end of the Age. *The Kingdom is yet to come in full power and glory.*

Luke 21:25–31 (Speaking of the end times) “Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; ... 21:27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 21:28 But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near!”

21:29 Then He told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 21:30 As soon as they put out leaves you can see for yourselves and recognize that summer is already near. 21:31 **In the same way, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.**

Matthew 26:29 (At the Lord’s supper, the first “new passover” for a New Age) “I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day **when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.**”

! There is a sense in which we have been called into the Kingdom and as we do the work Christ has given us, we presenting the reality of the Kingdom in the present world:

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 1:13–14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness **and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son**, 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

! But it is also very clear that we have not entered the fully reality of the Kingdom, yet:

Acts 14:19–22 (after a time of persecution) 14:21 When they (Paul and his companions) had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and **saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**

2 Peter 1:8–11 (*Peter describes 7 virtues/qualities that help us grow grace to be fruitful and effective*) 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 1:11 **For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

! Depending on the rules we apply to the interpretation of Revelation, John foresees the announcement of the Kingdom as something yet future:

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

! In order to understand the issues, we need to jump forward to the very end of the Bible and the Book of Revelation to consider a passage that lies at the heart of this whole controversy:

Revelation 20:1–8 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 20:2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years. 20:3 He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that he would no longer deceive the nations until the 1,000 years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time.

20:4 Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. I also saw the people who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of God’s word, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with the Messiah for 1,000 years.

20:5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of the Messiah, and they will reign with Him for 1,000 years.

20:7 When the 1,000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison 20:8 and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of

the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea.

There are several issues to deal with concerning this passage:

1. Is the 1,000 years essentially *literally* or *only symbolic*?
2. What does the binding, imprisonment, and release of the Devil mean?
3. What does “come to life” mean in this passage - a “spiritual resurrection” or a literal resurrection?
4. What does the reign of Christ with his people mean here?

! There are three major views as to how this 1000 years fits in the flow of History.

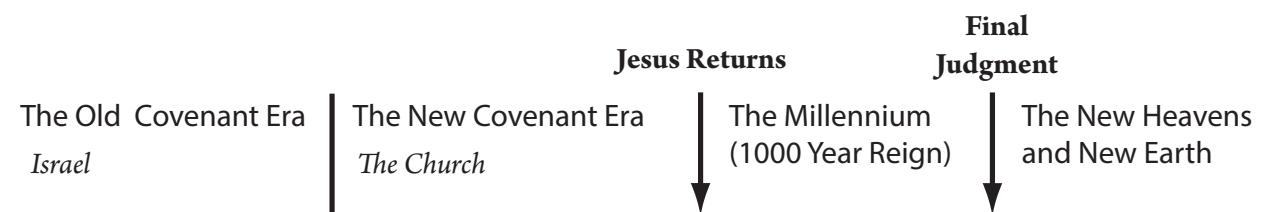
Note: the prefixes PRE, POST, and A relate to the timing of Jesus’ return/arrival in relation to this period:

Pre - Jesus arrives BEFORE the 1000 years,

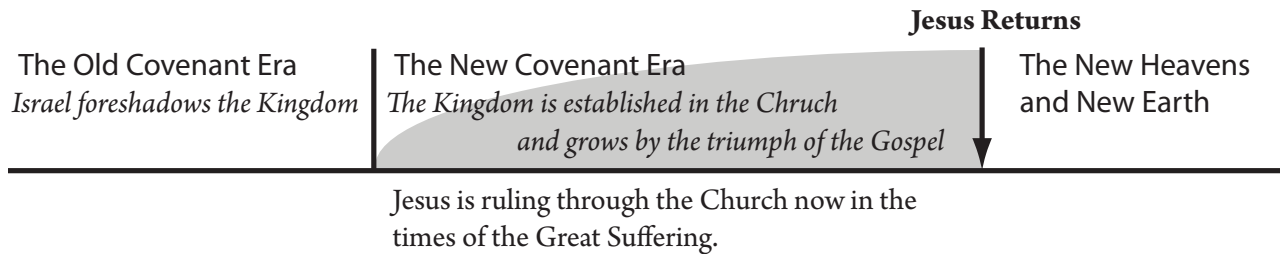
Post - Jesus arrives AFTER the 1000 years

A - Jesus returns at the End of the 1000 but has been ruling all along - this view treats the whole passage as *pure symbolism*.

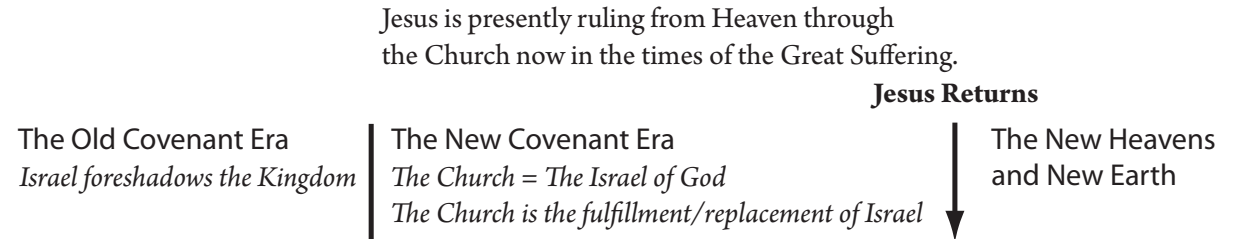
- **PreMillennialism**



- **Postmillennialism**



- **Amillennialism**



10.3.4 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-53
The Rapture / The Translation-Resurrection /
 The "Catching Up"

It is true that the term "rapture" is not a biblical term; but neither is the word "Trinity." The term "rapture" comes from the Latin translation (*raptus*) of the Greek term "*harpzo*" that appears in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 which is generally translated as "suddenly caught/snatched up." So although the term is not found in the Bible, the concept which the term represents is.

The term “Rapture” is used as a short-hand reference for the what the Scriptures reveal about the fate of those who will be alive at the return/arrival (*parousia*) of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. 4:14 Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus.

4:15 For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: We who are still alive at the Lord’s coming (*parousia*) will certainly have no advantage over [will not precede] those who have fallen asleep. 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel’s voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 4:17 Then we who are still alive [who are left] will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so we will always be with the Lord. 4:18 **Therefore encourage one another with these words.**

! This passage primarily addresses believers who have “fallen asleep”/died before the Lord returns.

! Note first that those who have “fallen asleep” *will be brought with* the Lord at His appearing (*parousia*) 4:14.

! Notice the sequence of events:

1. The Lord descends from Heaven with heralds,
2. The Dead in Christ will rise first,
3. Those who are left, those alive will be *caught up*

! If we correlated this passage with 1 Corinthians 15, we deduce that this is a *resurrection* of the dead and a *transformation* of the living:

1 Corinthians 15:50–53 Brothers, I tell you this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption.

15:51 Listen! I am telling you a mystery: **We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed**, 15:52 in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 15:53 For this corruptible must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal must be clothed with immortality.

! This passage affirms that at the return of the Lord there will be some who do not pass through death and resurrection but are *instantly transformed*.

10.3.5 What is the debate on the Rapture about?

That there will be a “rapture” is not debated. What is hotly debated is the timing of this Rapture. Before we begin working through these complex and complicated issues, the words of Douglas Moo are helpful and help us keep focus on the right things:

“The truth of the imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is an important and indispensable element of biblical truth. That this coming is to be premillennial the Scriptures plainly state. That a time of unprecedented Tribulation will immediately precede that coming and that living believers will be raptured into the presence of Christ at His coming are also plainly stated. But the time of that Rapture with respect to the Tribulation is nowhere plainly stated. No Old Testament or New Testament author directly addresses that question or states the nature of that relationship as a point of doctrine. What I think the Scriptures indicate about this relationship has been stated on the preceding pages. But, because this conviction is founded upon logic, inferences, and legitimately debated points of exegesis, I cannot, indeed must not,

allow this conviction to represent any kind of barrier to full relationships with others who hold differing convictions on this point. May our discussions on this point enhance, not detract from, our common expectation of the “blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13)

(Douglas Moo, from *Three Views on the Rapture*, 211)

- **Key Points To Keep in Mind:**

The teaching of the rapture is basically and “in house” debate among Premillennialists - those who believe that Jesus will return and rule on this present earth in a literal, historical kingdom. For both Amillennialists and Postmillennialists, the issue of the timing of the Rapture is irrelevant. Denying both the literal nature of the Great Tribulation and the Millennium, these groups are forced to see the rapture as being part of the appearing/return of Christ at the end of this age with the New Heavens and Earth following.

Among premillennialists, there is really no debate about the reality of the Rapture. *The debate is primarily concerned with the timing of the Rapture:* When will it take place? This is the major question that we will consider.

Before moving forward, in the quote above Moo makes several good points that I think would be helpful to elaborate on to set the stage for our discussion.

Legitimately Debated Points of Exegesis

Unfortunately the issue of the timing of the rapture has been a hotly debated and often divisive topic. This is unfortunate because it is part of the “blessed hope” that we have in the Lord’s return and our being gathered into His presence.

The first thing that we must do in thinking on this issue is to cultivate a mind of humility. Godly men and women have studied this issue for centuries now and have come to very different conclusions on the matter. I think that almost all would agree with Moo that the issue of the timing of the rapture is nowhere explicitly stated in Scripture. This issue is not settled by concrete points of grammar and syntax. This is largely a theological debate, not merely a linguistic debate. There are many pieces to this “puzzle” which must be logically fitted together with the other pieces. In the final analysis it is clear that we do not have all the pieces that we need to see the picture clearly.

Logic

The convictions that one holds about the time of the Rapture are large-

ly determined (predetermined) by one's Ecclesiology (the study of the Church) and therefore how one understands the relationship of Israel and the Church. Because of this everyone enters this discussion with certain logical and theological presuppositions than in a very real sense predetermine the outcome.

Inferences

Bringing the first two points together leads to the final reality: no matter what view one takes on the timing of the Rapture, the final conclusion has to be based on certain inferences drawn from the correlation of the relevant passages and the shape of one's larger theology. What does this mean? It means that we cannot make the issue of the timing of the Rapture a firm doctrine. The Scripture seems to give us too much of the "Big Picture" without enough of the "details" that we need to see how it all fits together.

With these things in mind, it is important to understand that each of the views we will consider solves certain problems while at the same time raising others. At present there is no "perfect" solution. And there probably will not be one until all things fall into place as they must and Jesus appears to set us all right. For this reason, some are taking an "agnostic" position on the timing of the Rapture. This position says that Scriptures are intentionally unclear on this issue to motivate Christ's people to faithfulness and watchfulness. This is a good exhortation to us all.

• What are the problematic questions that each view must face?

It is important to note that each of the views that we will consider have problems. This stems from the fact that we do not have all the details that we need to come to a final, absolute conclusion on the issue of the timing of the Rapture. Some views are better than others simply because they deal with the relevant passages in a more direct way while at the same time addressing issues raised by correlating passages.

Here are some main questions that raise problems for all of the views that we will consider:

1. What is the relationship of Israel and the Church in God's future plans? How should we understand the fulfillment of the "times of the Gentiles" and the fulfillment of the Romans 11:26 - "until the full number of the Gentiles have come in."
2. What is the relationship of the Rapture to the *Parousia* (the Arrival of Jesus)?

3. How will God protect the Church from/through/in the Great Tribulation?
4. Who will populate the Millennial Kingdom? How will both Jews and Gentiles make it through the Day of Wrath to enter the Kingdom in non-glorified bodies. (Is it possible for the unrighteous to enter this Kingdom?)

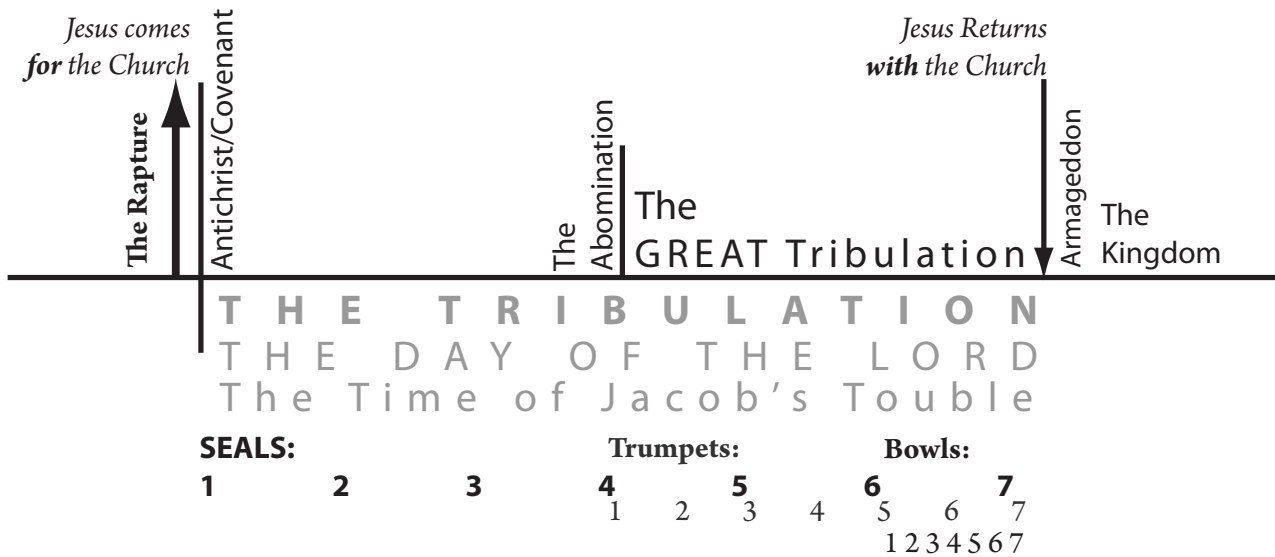
- **What are the different views on the timing of the Rapture?**

The Partial Rapture view

The partial rapture view is one that deals with the extent of the Rapture more than the timing of the Rapture. It states that only those who are waiting, watching, and faithful (those who are mature in Christ) will be raptured before the Tribulation. Then, Jesus will rapture the other immature believers as they wake up as well as those come to faith during the Tribulation. The parables in Matthew 24 and 25 are often used to support this view. Also Revelation 7:9, 14; 11:2; 12:5; 16:15 are verses presented as the times for these various raptures.

The problems with this view are multiple and overwhelming. First, it violates that nature of the Church as the Body of Christ - the baptism of the Holy Spirit binds us all together both mature and immature. Second, the Rapture is never presented as a “reward” for the mature as this view claims, Paul says clearly that we all will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-51). Thirdly, in all of the Rapture passages, it is clear that Christians as a whole are in view, not just a group of mature or watching believers. *This view is so problematic that it really does not warrant further discussion.*

The Pre-Tribulation view



The Pre-Trib view was popular by the teachings of John Nelson Darby in the mid 1880's. The view was spread in the 20th century by The Scofield Reference Bible, the writings of Leon Wood (*Is the Rapture Next?*), John F. Walvoord (*The Rapture Question*), and J. Dwight Pentecost (*Things to Come*). All of these are men were significant movers in the spread of Dispensational Premillennialism in our times. More recently, the Pre-Trib position has been popularized by the *Left Behind* novel series. It is one of the “younger” theories on the Rapture.

This view teaches that the Rapture will occur before the seven year “tribulation” - before the beginning of the 70th Week of Daniel. Often the imagery of Jewish Betrothal and Wedding ceremonies are drawn on as the backdrop of what will happen. Jesus is betrothed to His Bride (the Church), He leaves to prepare a place for her, He returns (at an unexpected time) to claim her, He takes her away in private to consummate the marriage, the wedding guests celebrate for seven days.

Positives:

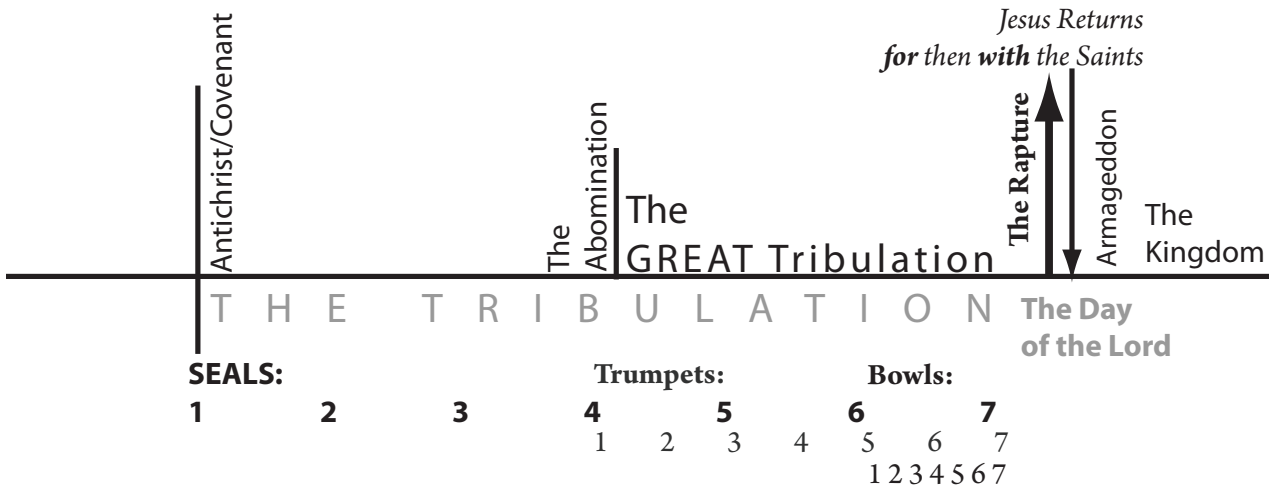
- Easily explains how the Church will be kept from “the hour of testing” coming on the whole earth and thus the Wrath of God (Revelation 3:10).
- Keeps a strong distinction between God’s future purposes for the Church and Israel.

- Does a better job explaining who will populate the Millennial Kingdom. This view leaves an interval of time after the Rapture but before the End for both Jews and Gentiles to come to faith.

Criticisms:

- May keep too strong a distinction between God's future purposes for the Church and Israel. For this reason, this position must argue that Matthew 24-25 is not related to the Church in any specific sense but only to Israel in the End Times.
- Has to make the arrival (*parousia*) of Jesus different from the Rapture. Paul, however, seems to relate the arrival of Jesus (*parousia*), our being gathered to Christ (the Rapture) and the Day of the Lord as intertwined events.
- May equate too many details of the End: The Tribulation = Daniel's 70th Week = Day of the Lord = The Wrath of God. Scripture seems to make some distinction about these. It is probably better to see them as different aspects of the same general period of time with different purposes.
- Makes the Rapture "secret" - only "seen" by believers.
- Places too much emphasis on Revelation 3:10 - "kept from the hour..." - referring to the Rapture.

The Post-Tribulation view



The Post-Tribulation view simply states that the Rapture will occur after or at the end of the Tribulation. The Rapture occurs at the same time as the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth. A form of this view is most likely the oldest of the views. It was held in part by the early Church Fathers. (The Fathers did not debate this issue in the same way it has been debated in recent times.)

In recent times, this view has gained wide acceptance among scholars due to the link of the language used in 1 Thessalonians 4 to similar language used in the Greco-Roman world about the visit of an Emperor or King to a city. The “appearing/arriving” (parousia - 1 Thess 4:15) of the dignitary was met with a delegation from the city who would go out to “meet” (apantēsis - 1 Thess 4:17) then accompany him back to the city. Robert Gundry, Douglas Moo, and Ben Witherington III are prominent and respected theologians who hold this view.

Positives:

- Makes a strong point about the passages that seem to indicate that the Church should be prepared for the Day of the Lord which seems to be part of the parousia, “arrival” of the Lord Jesus.
- This view is the least complicated in terms of simply taking the language in all the relevant passages at face value.

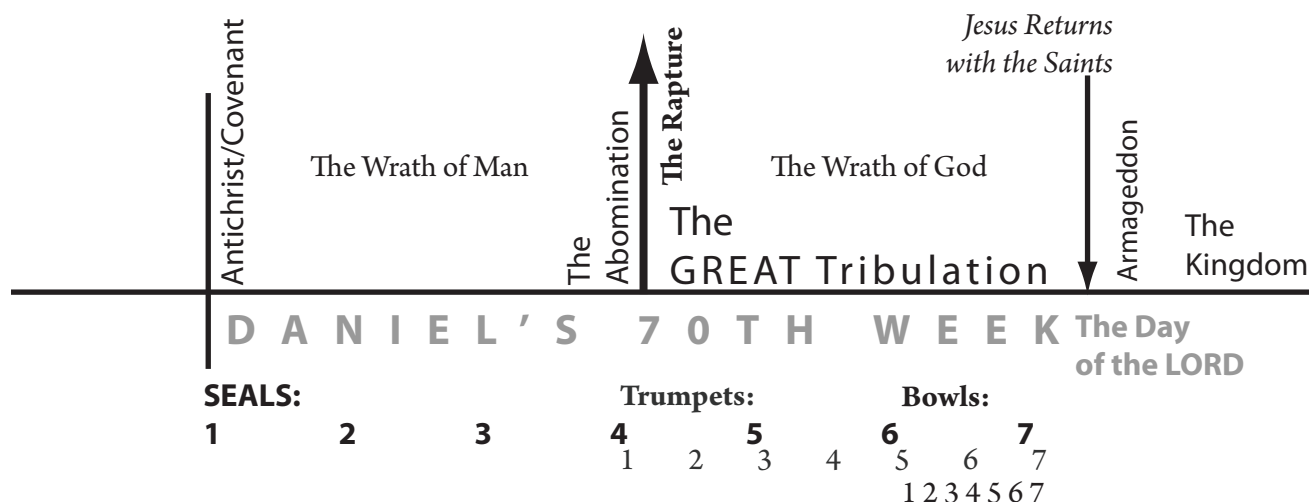
Criticisms:

- This view is the most complicated in terms of how it must address

certain logical and inferential questions.

- Has a hard time explaining how this keeps us from the Wrath of God in the Great Tribulation.
- Does not clearly distinguish God's plans for the Church and His plans for Israel in the Last Days.
- Has difficulty explaining who will populate the Millennium. If everyone is Raptured at the end, there is no one righteous left in non-glorified bodies to populate the Kingdom. Also, the "sheep and goat" judgment of Matthew 25:31-46 seems to occur after the 70th week but before the Millennium. This judgment will keep the unrighteous from entering the Kingdom. This is a significant problem for this view.

The Mid-Tribulation view



The Mid-Trib view is in some sense a mediating view between the Post and Pre Trib views. This view begins by making some distinction between the 70th Week/Seven of Daniel and the Great Tribulation. Emphasis is placed on the Middle of the Week/Seven and the events surrounding the revealing of Antichrist. The first part of the 7 years is characterized as the time of the "Wrath of Man," the second half as the "Wrath of the God." Thus it is only necessary for the Church to be raptured before the events of the final 3 1/2 years of the Great Tribulation.

This view sees Revelation 14 as a description of the events "behind the

scenes” of the Rapture. First there is the vision of 144,000 standing with Jesus. These are taken to be Church age saints, not the 144,000 of Israel described earlier in the book. After this vision, three angels come forth declaring the Gospel and the eternal destruction that will come upon those who worship the Beast. After this, there are two reapings of the Earth. The first (14:14-16) is taken to be Jesus “reaping” His people from the Earth (the Rapture), the second (14:17) is taken to be a reaping of the wicked for wrath. This view is held by J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. and Gleason L. Archer.

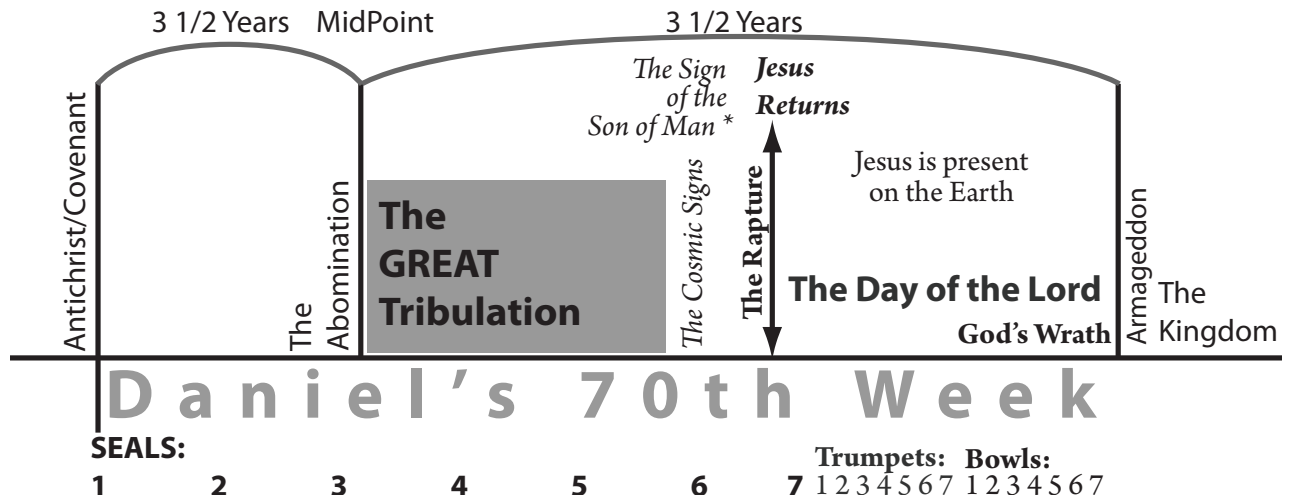
Positives:

- Is probably correct in distinguishing Daniel’s 70th Week/Seven and the Great Tribulation.
- Is right to focus things toward the middle of the Seven years; this does seem to be the beginning of the end.
- Is able to explain how the Church will see the rise of “The Man of Sin” (2 Thess 2) and be removed from the Earth before the Wrath of God.

Criticisms:

- Many of the arguments made by this view would fit a post-trib view better.
- May make too sharp a distinction between the “Wrath of Man” (first half of the seven years) and the “Wrath of God” (second half)

The Pre-Wrath view



This view is the “youngest” of all the views. It was first presented in Marvin Rosenthal’s book *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church* in 1990. The view was expanded in the writings of Robert Van Kampen (*The Sign and The Rapture Question Answered: Plain & Simple*). Recently a detailed presentation and defense of this position was given in H. L. Nigro’s *Before God’s Wrath: The Bible’s Answer to the Timing of the Rapture*.

Of all the views, this one is probably the most complex in terms of its analyzing the relevant texts and correlating them to supporting texts. We can summarize this view under the following points:

- God has only promised to keep the Church from His Wrath, not suffering and persecution. Therefore, the Church can expect to endure part of the persecution under the reign of Antichrist.
- There are three periods of Judgment in Revelation: Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls.
- The first four Seals represent God setting the stage for the end. The Fifth Seal (The Cry of the Martyrs) represents the Great Tribulation.
- The Day of the Lord and thus the Wrath of God begins with the Sixth Seal. This Sixth Seal also “includes” both the Trumpet and Bowl judgments.
- Jesus will come for the Church (The Rapture) after the Fifth Seal (The Great Tribulation) but before the Sixth Seal (The Day of the Lord’s

Wrath).

Positives:

- Does bring a healthy critique of the accuracy of the other views in actually dealing with the particulars (details) of the relevant texts.
- Gives an internally coherent presentation of the all the facts given the framework of its argument.
- Generally gives a more detailed analysis of the particulars of the judgments in Revelation.

Criticisms:

- This view is overly complicated and difficult to follow.
- Probably over analyzes many of the texts and draws too many inferences about the relationships of the different events. For instance, this view argues that Jesus' return in Matthew 24 is not the same as the one described in Revelation 19. *This is a extreme minority view.*
- Separates Jesus return to the Earth at the time of the Rapture from His "return" in Revelation 19 to destroy the Beast and his armies. Thus this view has Jesus present on Earth during much of the latter part of the 70th week during the Trumpet and Bowl judgments! This too is based on many inferences and assumptions that may or may not be accurate.
- Has a lot of "minority opinions" that seem to be special pleading.

Why does this whole issue make any difference?

Many times we simply believe what others have taught us to believe. This is an important part of tradition and passing our story and worldview from one generation to the next. However, in issues like the doctrine of the Rapture we must give a critical evaluation to the things that we have been taught to make sure that "these things are so" (remember the Bereans Acts 17:11).

In our times, the teachings on the Rapture have solidified into major traditions. This means that they also bring with them a lot of "baggage." Since our view on the timing of the Rapture will help us prepare for the events of the End (if we are present during the final days) we must carefully evaluate each of these traditions to see what is in line with Scripture and what is not. I am convinced that presently there is no one view that gets everything right: each has strengths, each has weaknesses.

In the West (particularly America) many hold to a Pre-Trib position because it brings comfort. This is understandable. However, we cannot fall into the trap of believing that Jesus will rescue us from all forms of suffering, affliction and persecution. This is clearly not the case. Many of our brothers and sisters throughout the World are already enduring persecution and suffering on a level that most of us in the West have never been exposed to. When we hear stories of brothers and sisters in Christ watching their families being burned alive, having their fingernails plucked out, imprisoned for years, starved, beaten, mutilated, etc., we have to ask, “Does Jesus promise to protect His people from all forms of suffering?” The answer is clearly, “NO!” Jesus will deliver us from the coming Wrath of God but He never promises to deliver us from persecution, suffering and affliction.

I am concerned that many in the West are placing their hope in a Pre-Trib rapture scenario rather than Christ Himself. It may be that America dissolves long before the End and we who are Christians will face suffering like that our other brothers and sisters are enduring in the present. Jesus plans for His Kingdom do not rest on the continuing on of the American Way (or the Pax Americana).

One final word about the coming Wrath of God. Exemption from God’s Wrath does not exempt us from His judgment. In the letters to the Seven Churches in Revelation it is clear that Jesus calls these assemblies to repentance lest they face His disciplinary judgment. Peter also gives us a sobering exhortation: “For it is time for judgment to begin, starting with the house of God. And if it starts with us, what will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).

In the context, Peter is discussing the suffering that the believers are presently facing and that in reality they are sharing in the suffering of Christ which makes them fit for His Kingdom. *Whatever view we take on the Rapture, we must never think that this doctrine promises to protect us from the refining fire of suffering that God allows for His people which makes them worthy of His Kingdom:*

Acts 14:22 They strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, **“We must enter the kingdom of God through many persecutions (tribulations).”**

10.3.6 The Day of the Lord

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, 2 Peter 3:10

1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 About the times and the seasons: Brothers, you do not need anything to be written to you. 5:2 For you yourselves know very well **that the Day of the Lord** will come just like a thief in the night. 5:3 When they say, “Peace and security,” then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains come on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

5:4 But you, brothers, are not in the dark, for this day to overtake you like a thief. 5:5 For you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. 5:6 So then, we must not sleep, like the rest, but we must stay awake and be serious. 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

5:8 But since we belong to the day, we must be serious and put the armor of faith and love on our chests, and put on a helmet of the hope of salvation. 5:9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**, 5:10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.

- This passage speaks in the “spirit” of many of the passages that deal with the “Day of the Lord” in the Hebrew Scriptures. It will be a “day” in which 1) the unrighteous are *judged*, and 2) the righteous (those who belong to God) will be *saved and vindicated*.

2 Peter 3:9–13 But **the Day of the Lord** will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.

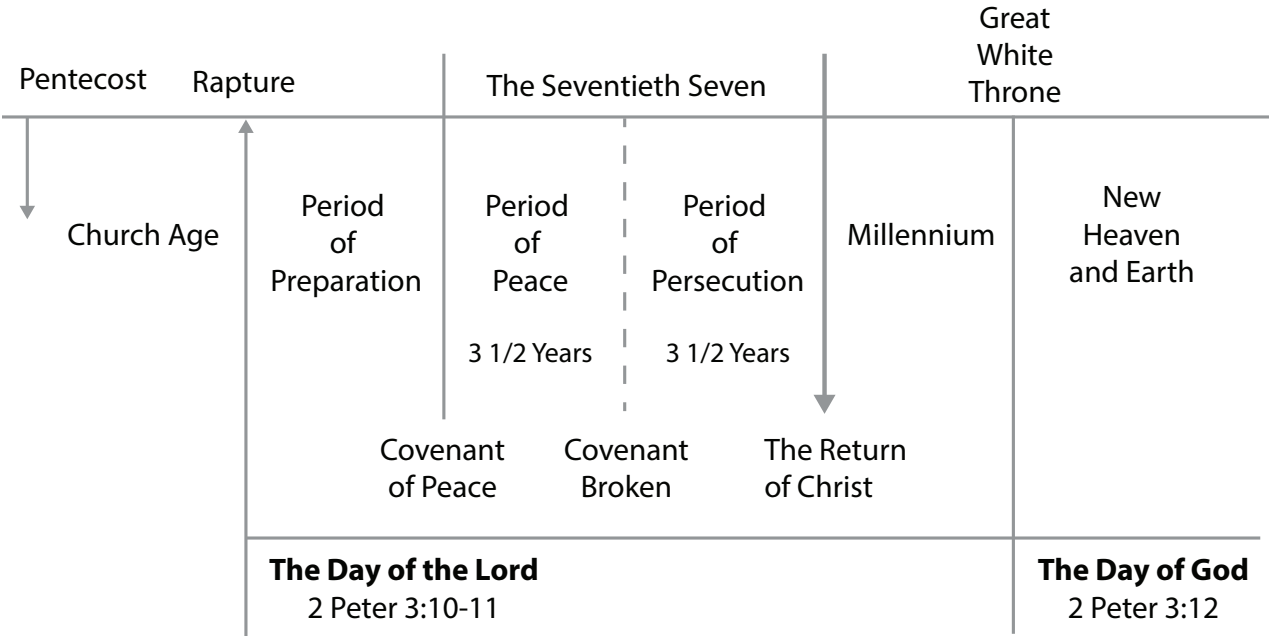
3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness 3:12 as you wait for and earnestly desire the coming of the day of God. The heavens will be on fire and be dissolved because of it, and the elements will

melt with the heat. 3:13 **But based on His promise, we wait for the new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell.**

! In Peter’s statement here, he sees the destruction of the present creation as part of the Day of the Lord. This would mean that the “Day” is not a 24 hour period, but a span of time. The length of that span of time would be different depending on the conclusions we come to about other aspects of the end times and age to come.

*Below is chart prepared by John Walvoord, one of the key dispensational thinkers of the 20th Century. It is *one way* of viewing the major events of the end times.

A Dispensational View of the End Times



10.3.7 **Sideline: MAJOR ISSUE:**
Interpretational Schools and Systems
(Dispensationalism vs. Covenant Reformed)

Covenant (Federal Theology)

Covenant or Federal theology is usually associated with Reformed Theology and more specifically John Calvin (1509-64) and Calvinism. Although the theology of Calvin did much to lay the foundation for the later development of this tradition, Covenant Theology was only fully realized after the death of Calvin in the works of Kaspar Olevianus (1536-87), Johannes Cocceius (1603-99), and particularly François Turretin (1623-87).¹ Covenant theology has also been closely associated with “5-Point Calvinism,” although *the two systems are not synonymous*. Calvinism addresses theological issues of *salvation*, Covenant theology addresses issues of *systematic* and *historical theology*.

Basically, Covenant Theology teaches that God has dealt with humanity in history on the basis of Two Theological Covenants, The Covenant of **Works** and the Covenant of **Grace**. Some older Covenant theologians include a third covenant—the Covenant of **Redemption**—that was made in eternity past between God the Father and God the Son that provided the basis for the other two covenants worked out in history.

These theological covenants are defined as contracts between God (the superior party) and certain people (Adam, then the elect) in which *promises* are given by God that can be received only through the accomplishment of the *conditions* given in the covenant. If the covenant was broken then certain penalties would also be applied.

Before the fall, Adam was under the *Covenant of Works* which promised eternal life if he would obey God and not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (conditions). Adam broke this covenant when he ate from the forbidden tree and thereby forfeited the benefits of that covenant and was penalized with *death* (both spiritual and physical).

After the Fall, God has graciously dealt with his people (the elect) through the *Covenant of Grace* by forgiving their sins and empowering them to live for Him. The promise of this covenant is again eternal life with the only condition for fulfillment being faith in Christ. The penalty for this covenant is eternal death. In the Old Testament this forgiveness was affected by

¹ Turretin's *Institutes of Elentic Theology* became the textbook for covenant theology and would not be replaced until Hodge's *Systematic Theology* appeared in 1872.

the *anticipation* of Jesus' death in the animal sacrifices of the Levitical system stipulated in the Mosaic covenant.² In the New Testament this covenant was realized in the work of Jesus—His death, burial, and resurrection.

It is important to note that these covenants are *theological covenants*; they are **theological constructs** *derived from inference and speculation and are not specifically named in Scripture*. These covenants are not to be confused with the actual, specifically named *Biblical Covenants*: the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New. Covenant theologians would argue that the “theological covenants” give meaning and coherence to the biblical covenants.

This raises an important distinctive of Covenant Theology. Since all of the Biblical covenants are subsumed under the “Covenant of Grace” all of the biblical covenants are viewed to be essentially the same in nature and function, although being different in particular stipulations. In this sense, the Mosaic Covenant holds the promise of life to those who would keep the Law and continues to be a standard of conduct for believers even after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Because there is no clear distinction made between the Abrahamic, Mosaic and New covenants and their fulfillment in Christ, some Covenant theologians have adopted what has been termed *replacement theology*. This argument states that since the Church is viewed as the vehicle through which God now blesses all nations (as promised to Abraham) in the present time, the promises that were made to Israel as a nation are viewed as being fulfilled *spiritually* in the Church in the present age and in the age to come. The Church, in this sense, replaces Israel or becomes “spiritual Israel.” This spiritual fulfillment is also applied to other passages in the OT so that some parts of the prophets are not viewed as being *literal* explanations of how God would fulfill His promises but merely symbolic representations of the spiritual ideals.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* and catechism have become the most well known expressions of the ideas of covenant theology. In the 18th Century, Covenant theology became entrenched in the universities and seminaries of the North-East due to the teaching and works of men like Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge and Horace Bushnell. In recent times Louis Berkhof, J. I. Packer and R. C. Sproul have become the major voices of Covenant-Reformed theology.

2 Some Covenant theologians go so far as to say that everyone who was saved in the OT period was given a special revelation of what Christ would do in the future so that they might be saved.

Visualizing Covenant Theology	
<i>(The Covenant of Redemption — In Eternity)</i>	
The Covenant of Works	The Covenant of Grace
Adam > Fall	Everything after the Fall... All the Biblical Covenants Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New

Dispensationalism

The end of the 19th Century was a very turbulent time within conservative Christianity. Since The Reformation, Covenant-Reformed theology and the hermeneutics³ that supported it, had dominated the academic scene. However, the rise of *Premillennial Dispensationalism* in the 1800's would challenge the status quo. With the work of John N. Darby and C. I. Scofield, Dispensationalism gained a wide acceptance among the common people.

By the middle of the 19th Century, liberalism (fueled by the modernist worldview) had taken a strong hold in the seminaries and universities that were founded as schools to train Christian ministers. Schools like Harvard and Princeton became embroiled in battles for orthodoxy. At the heart of the battle were issues related to *how the Bible was to be interpreted*. The liberals were proclaiming that the Bible was nothing more than myth and human invention. Men like Charles Hodge stood opposed to these ideas and fought against them in their teaching and publications.

Another battle over interpretation was brewing not only between the conservatives and the liberals, but also *within* conservatism. The Covenant-Reformed theologians had been proclaiming that due to Israel's total rejection of their Messiah, Jesus Christ, the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament were going to be fulfilled "spiritually" in the New Testament Church. This conclusion also led some Covenant theologians to view the Church as the replacement for national Israel, thus becoming "spiritual Israel."

Many passages from the Old and New Testaments were read in light of a "spiritual fulfillment" principle grounded in the replacement of Israel by the Church. The "spiritual fulfillment" principle also linked with an *amillennial* or "realized" eschatology within Covenant/Federal theology. This brand of covenant theology taught that just as the Church had become "spiritual Israel" so also Christ was now reigning "spiritually" over the earth and would

3 Hermeneutics are the methods and means used to interpret the Bible.

not return to establish a visible earthly kingdom, but to usher in the Eternal Kingdom. The interpretation of Revelation 20 and the mention of a 1,000 year reign of Christ was the epicenter of this debate.

Before we go further, it is important to understand the significance of this Millennial debate. Revelation 20 states that Satan will be imprisoned and Christ will reign on the Earth with his Saints for 1000 years. What does this mean? And when does this happen? There are three options:

1. PreMillennialism: the view that Christ will return *before* (pre)the beginning of the 1000 reign.
2. PostMillennialism: the view the Christ will return at the *end* (post) of the 1000 reign which will be accomplished spiritually through the Church.
3. AMillennialism: the view that the 1000 year reign is *symbolic* and refers to the time between Christ's ascension and His return.

Although there is great debate over which view the early church held, there is evidence that many of the Church fathers held some form of Premillennialism (referred to as *historic premillennialism*). Others seemed to reject it. By the time of Augustine, Postmillennialism held sway as the growing Roman church in the West “conquered” more and more territory. By the time you get to Luther and the Reformers, Amillennialism takes hold as a more symbolic interpretation of the Bible becomes common.

Although its roots reach back to the 17th Century, Dispensationalism does not take its place as a major theological movement until the work of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). As a minister in the Anglican church, Darby had become increasingly disturbed by the corruption and apathy that he saw in the denomination. In 1828 he left the Anglican church declaring it to be in ruins⁴ and joined with the Plymouth Brethren—a nondenominational, restorationist group which met in homes for Bible study and spiritual edification. During this period Darby developed an elaborate historical system for interpreting the message of the Bible as well as a strong emphasis on the necessity of a future, earthly reign of Jesus the Messiah.

Based on Darby's early work, Dispensationalism places emphasis on a method of *historical-grammatical, literal interpretation* of the Bible.⁵ This distinctive led to three primary points of departure from the traditional

4 Darby actually confessed the he believed most of the organized denominations had become the ‘hand tools of the devil.’

5 This does not mean that the Bible is to be interpreted without reference and recognition of figures of speech and poetic language. Instead, this model seeks to understand the text as it would be understood by the original audience recognizing poetry and figurative language as expressions that do have objective truths behind them.

Covenant Reformed position: 1) the Old Testament covenants were not fulfilled “spiritually” in the Church but would be fulfilled at some point in the future to national Israel, 2) the Church began on the day of Pentecost and was not present in the Old Testament, and 3) that Jesus would return to rule for 1,000 years on this earth in a period called the Millennium (*premillennialism*).

Dispensationalism is developed around the framework of an *historical-theological construct*⁶ which is used to interpret the Bible. This methodology is one of the key features that distinguishes this approach from Covenant Theology. Whereas Covenant Theology seeks to explain the flow of Biblical revelation through the “theological covenants,” Dispensationalism seeks to explain the flow of Biblical revelation through *historical eras*.

Classically, seven “dispensations” or “administrations” were put forth as the tools to “rightly divide the Word of Truth.” Unlike the theological covenants, the dispensations were defined by how God gives, takes away or expands His revelation *progressively in history*.⁷ These dispensations were defined as that of:

1. Innocence (from creation to fall),
2. Conscience (from Fall to Flood),
3. Human Government (Flood to Abraham),
4. Promise (Abraham till Sinai),
5. Law (Sinai to Christ),
6. Grace (Christ till His return),
7. The Millennium (the 1,000 reign of Christ on the earth prior to the coming of the Eternal Order).

The concept of a *dispensation* dates as far back as Irenaeus in the 2nd Century. Other Christian writers and leaders since then, such as Augustine of Hippo, Francis Turretin (one of the “fathers” of Covenant Theology!), and Isaac Watts suggested certain historical, “dispensational” schemes in their teaching. Even the Westminster Confession of Faith notes that there is only one covenant of Grace worked out “under various dispensations”!

6 The “theological covenants” and the “dispensations” are both **constructs**. Though both are founded on general principles observed in Scripture, neither of the two arrangements is specifically named or referred to by Scripture. The Sacred Text does not specifically mention a “Covenant of Works” just as it does not describe the time between the Fall of Adam the Flood “the dispensation or administration of conscience.” Although constructs are not inherently wrong, great care must be given to make sure they are based on clear logic and adequate biblical principles.

7 The concept of *progressive revelation* is also a key tenet for Dispensationalism. God did not reveal everything all at once, but gradually throughout history He has made His plans known little by little. Thus the Apostle John knew more about God’s purposes than Abraham or Moses.

As it relates to spirituality, Dispensationalism views the relationship of the Old and New Testaments in a very different light than does Covenant theology. Covenant theologians had taught that the OT and NT were bound together by the common theological “Covenant of Grace.”⁸ This led to the deduction that the Mosaic Covenant was really just as much a gracious and binding covenant on the Church as was the New Covenant. As we have already seen, the Covenant-Reformed theologians generally view the keeping of some part of the Mosaic Law as an act of gratitude and obedience for the work that Christ is doing in the believer. Dispensationalists, however, view the Law very differently.

Dispensationalists view the Mosaic and New covenants as essentially different covenants in nature, purpose and fulfillment.⁹ With the inception of the New Covenant with Jesus’ death, Dispensationalists have argued that the reign of the Law has been brought to an end (Hebrews 8:7-13) and the New covenant is distinguished from the Old Mosaic Covenant in that the Law of God is written on the heart and not on stone (Hebrews 8:10). In other words, the Law is not to be kept *as a covenant stipulation* as it was under the Mosaic code.

Many dispensationalists argue that trying to keep the Law externally only results in more acts of sin (Romans 7:14-20; 1 Corinthians 15:56). The Law does still give revelation about the holy character of God, but it is *no longer enforced as a covenant stipulation* for the people of God. Instead, the believer *fulfills* the requirements of the law by living *by faith expressed in love* in light of the work of Christ. Where righteousness is pursued, sin is extinguished.

Dispensational theology becomes closely associated with the Keswick and Fundamentalist movements of the 20th Century. Within conservative Christianity a strong division still exists between Covenant-Reformed and Dispensational theologians. Within Dispensationalism there are divisions over some key interpretive issues.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Dispensationalism has had a profound impact on evangelicalism in America through the popular teaching of men like D. L. Moody, Donald Grey Barnhouse, and Charles Ryrie. The Scofield Reference Bible, The Ryrie Study Bible and Dallas Theological

8 Covenant theologians affirm that these ‘covenants’ are not specifically mentioned in Scripture, but they can be *deduced* from certain contexts (see Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 211ff.).

9 Dispensationalists, especially in recent years, have based their understanding of the *biblical* covenants on other, analogous ancient near eastern covenants. The Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants are viewed as *covenants of grant* which are *unconditional* and *permanent*. The Mosaic Covenant (and The Law) is another form of covenant based on *obligation* and therefore temporary.

10 There are three major strands of Dispensationalism: Classic, Traditional, and Progressive.

Seminary deeply rooted dispensational theology in American culture in the second half of the 20th Century.

10.3.8 **Jesus Will Bring Judgment and Salvation** 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 We must always thank God for you, brothers. This is right, since your faith is flourishing and the love each one of you has for one another is increasing. 1:4 Therefore, we ourselves boast about you among God's churches—about your endurance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you endure. 1:5 It is a clear evidence of God's righteous judgment that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, 1:6 since it is righteous for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you 1:7 and to reward with rest you who are afflicted, along with us.

This will take place at the revelation (*apokalupsis*) of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His powerful angels, 1:8 taking vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 1:9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from His glorious strength 1:10 in that day when He comes to be glorified by His saints and to be admired by all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed. 1:11 And in view of this, we always pray for you that our God will consider you worthy of His calling, and will, by His power, fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith, 1:12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by you, and you by Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

! As with the general truth about the Day of the Lord, at the revelation (*apokalupsis* - same word from which the book of *Revelation* gets its name) of Jesus, He will 1) bring destruction on those who do not know God and don't obey the Gospel, and 2) bring comfort and rest to His people.

10.3.9 **Jesus' Appearing and the The Man of Lawlessness** 2 Thessalonians 1-12

** Due to the complexity of this passage, I have broken it down into it's key "chunks."*

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Now concerning the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to Him: We ask you, brothers, 2:2 not to be easily upset in mind or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message or by a letter as if from us, alleging that the Day of the Lord has come.

- Apparently, false teachers have entered the church and taught that the Day of the Lord has already arrived. This causes trouble because Paul has apparently taught them that the coming of Jesus and our being gathered to Him must come before that Day. He will now give evidence why this cannot be the case.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.

- Paul gives two events that will preceded the Day of the Lord 1) the apostasy (rebellion), and 2) the revealing of the Man of Lawlessness who is referred to as The Antichrist and The Beast in John's writings.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's sanctuary, publicizing that he himself is God. 2:5 Don't you remember that when I was still with you I told you about this?

- Paul affirms what both Daniel and Revelation foresee about the coming of this Lawless One. He will exalt himself in the Lord's Temple above all else. *As we saw earlier in Daniel, Antiochus Epiphanes foreshadowed this during the intertestamental period.* More details about this are given in Revelation 13.

2 Thessalonians 2:6 And you know what currently restrains him, so that he will be revealed in his time. 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but the one now restraining will do so until he is out of the way, 2:8 and then the lawless one will be revealed.

- There has been endless debate about the identity of the “restrainer” in this passage. Because the “restrainer” is called “he” in 2:7 many believe this to be the Holy Spirit.

“The mystery of lawlessness” that Paul refers to here is probably similar to John's “spirit of Antichrist” this is present in the world and precedes the coming of the one who will embody the essence of this rebellion against the One True God:

1 John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. We know from this that it is the last hour.

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the person who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:3 but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world.

2 John 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, people who do not confess Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh. This person is the deceiver and the antichrist!

Who is the “Restrainer” in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7

In the history of interpretation of this verse, there have been many different solutions proposed:

1) the **Roman government** (*one of the earliest views held by Church Fathers, Tertullian, John Chrysostom*); 2) **Gospel preaching**; 3) **Law** (in general); 4) the **binding of Satan**; 5) the **providence of God**; 6) the **Jewish state** (B. B. Warfield); 7) the **Church**; 8) the **Holy Spirit**; 9) **Michael the Archangel** (see Daniel 12:1 and Revelation 12 where he is a key figure in the events surrounding the rise of the Lawless One)

*One of the keys to dealing with this passage is noting that the “restrainer” is referred to with a neuter pronoun, “it/what,” in verse 6 and a masculine pronoun, “he,” in verse 7.

The two most likely solutions are either The Holy Spirit or Michael the Archangel. The Holy Spirit has been one of the most widely accepted views and very plausible. Michael the Archangel is view that has gained some traction in recent times due to the growth of studies in extra-biblical, Jewish apocalyptic writings. For an excellent discussion of this view, see Ben Witherington’s commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

Ultimately, knowing the precise identity of this “restrainer” may not make that much of a difference in understanding the meaning of this passage. What is clear is that there is *someone* who is holding the “power of lawlessness” in check until the appropriate time. This implies some super-human power. Since Paul does not name this restrainer specifically, we should resist the temptation to be *dogmatic* on any view. What is sure is that at the appropriate time, the Man of Lawlessness will be revealed. Until then, he is being held back by the Lord-God’s superintendence of all history.

! KEY NOTE / Some dispensational, pre-tribulation rapture proponents have argued that the “restrainer” must be a reference to the Holy Spirit and if the Holy Spirit is removed from the Earth, then the Church must go with Him. This would mean that the Rapture would be guaranteed to take place before the appearing of the Lawless One. This view, however, strains the limits of *this* text. It may be that this is a reference to the removal of the *restraining influence* of the Holy Spirit, but it almost certainly cannot mean the removal of the Spirit’s *presence*. The

Spirit is omnipresent. Although I come from the dispensational tradition and I agree that this may in fact be a reference to the restraining influence of the Spirit, there is no reason to insist that this is a reference to the Rapture of the church.

2 Thessalonians 2:8b The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of His mouth and will bring him to nothing with the brightness of His coming (*parousia*).

! *This statement is one of the most important in this passage.* Here, Paul says that this Man of Lawlessness will be destroyed by Jesus at His arrival. For the views that take a “spiritualized” or non- futurist view (the things Paul talks about here have already happened) this statement is very problematic. However, if we take the view that Paul is actually referring to future events at the end of the age, as with other seemingly future referencing texts, there is no problem at all.

! This text also assumes that there will be another Temple build before the end of the age which is also confirmed by other passages from Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming (*parousia*) of the lawless one is based on Satan’s working, with all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders, 2:10 and with every unrighteous deception among those who are perishing. They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth in order to be saved. 2:11 For this reason God sends them a strong delusion so that they will believe what is false, 2:12 so that all will be condemned—those who did not believe the truth but enjoyed unrighteousness.

! **Daniel 11:36-45** is also a significant text referring to the rise of this “King” - Antichrist. In that text, many of the themes

developed in the NT are seen: 1) He will exalt himself above every other god, 2) he will reject the “gods of his fathers”, 3) he will go to war with other “kings” in the area and be victorious over them, 4) he will head out to a war in the north and come to an end there. (*For more discussion of this, you can get our study of Daniel online.*)

The Man of Lawlessness: The Identity of the coming Antichrist

The Antichrist is given many different titles and descriptions in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures: the **Little Horn** (Daniel 7:8), the **King of Bold Face** (Daniel 8:23), the **Coming Prince** (Daniel 9:26), the **one who makes desolate** (Daniel 9:27), the **Willful King** (Daniel 11:36), the **Man of Sin** (2 Thessalonians 2:3), the **Son of Destruction/Perdition** (2 Thessalonians 2:3), the **Lawless One** (2 Thessalonians 2:8), the **Antichrist** (1 John 2:22), and the **Beast** (Revelation 11:7). We can summarize the character and work of the Antichrist with the following points:

- The Antichrist will be a gentile from the people of the Old Roman Empire (see Daniel 9:26-27; Revelation 17:8ff).
- The Antichrist/”the coming Prince” will make a covenant with Israel which will mark the beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Seven/Week (see Daniel 9:27)
- In the middle of the Seventieth Seven/Week, the Antichrist will break the covenant and commit the “abomination that brings desolation” (see Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11; Matthew 24:15)
- The Antichrist will probably be killed and brought back to life (see Daniel 11:45b; Revelation 13:3,12)
- The Antichrist/Beast will claim to be god (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:6)
- The Antichrist will come to power *through* the empowerment of Satan (see 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)

- The Antichrist/Beast will be given authority to rule on earth for 42 months (1,260 days, time, times and half a time, 3 1/2 years) (see Daniel 7:25, 12:5-7; Revelation 13:5).
- The Antichrist/Beast will conquer the Saints and be given dominion over this World for a short time (see Revelation 13:7)
- The Antichrist/Beast will be assisted by a Second Beast/the False Prophet who will perform “miraculous” feats with the authority of Satan and the Beast (see Revelation 13:11ff.)
- The Antichrist will be destroyed by Jesus at His glorious return (see Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:20).

In the end, we see that this final world tyrant is given his authority and span of time by the One who truly rules all.

Sideline: A Closer Look at Some Key Ideas

10.3.10 What is The **Tribulation**?

It has been common since the late 1800's, early 1900's to equate The Tribulation with The Day of the Lord and the pouring out of God's wrath. However, with the relevant texts we have surveyed so far, it seems that this oversimplifies the issue.

I think it is very important to look at the actual usages of this term *thlipsis* that is translated as “tribulation” in key passages to get a clear picture of the concept and the period of time that Jesus speaks about in His teaching from the Mount of Olives.

(See page 33 for list of all the passages in which this term appears):

1. Jesus is the one to use the term (*thlipsis*) to refer to affliction/suffering/persecution (Matthew 13:21, 24:29; John 16:21; John 16:33). Jesus is also the first to mention this period related to the end times in Matthew 24:21. He says this period will occur *at the time of the Abom-*

ination of Desolation and *before* the signs that accompany the Day of the Lord.

2. The term is used throughout the NT to refer to *persecution*: Acts 11:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 3:7; Hebrews 10:3, or to *suffering and affliction in general*: Acts 14:22, 20:23; 2 Corinthians 1:8; James 1:27.
3. The term can be used to refer to the *effects* of the Lord's judgment against sinners—*affliction*: Romans 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:6
4. The Lord uses *thlipsis* to mature and perfect His people: Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3; 2 *Corinthians* 4:17. It is expected that Christ's people will experience it in their lives: Romans 8:35, 12:12. Because we have experienced suffering/affliction we can comfort others who are going through the same: 2 Corinthians 1:4.
5. There is a sense in which our afflictions/sufferings are a sharing in the afflictions/sufferings of Christ, *especially as we suffer for others*: Ephesians 3:13; Philippians 4:14; Colossians 1:24.

In Revelation, John uses the term in a distinct way:

“I, John, your brother and **partner in the tribulation**, kingdom, and endurance **that are in Jesus**, was on the island called Patmos because of God's word and the testimony about Jesus” (Revelation 1:9).

It is clear that John sees his persecution and imprisonment as a sharing in “*the tribulation*” that is “in Jesus.” The fact that John uses the definite article here (the) points to the fact that he is referencing a *specific* tribulation or *kind* of tribulation.

When we look at this statement in the context of John's writings, we find Jesus saying, “I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. **You will have suffering** (*thlipsis-tribulation*) **in this world**. Be courageous! I have conquered the world” (John 16:33). To be a follower of Jesus and belong to Him and be “in Him” in this world means that persecution/suffering/affliction are guaranteed. Again as Jesus says, “If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18). In John's writings, “the world” consists of all that is opposed to Christ.

In Revelation 2:9-10 the church at Smyrna is experiencing *thlipsis* - affliction - and some will be thrown in prison for 10 days, a clear reference to *persecution*.

In Revelation 2:22, the false teacher Jezebel will be made sick by the Lord and experience *affliction* as a result of her wickedness.

Finally, John sees this:

Revelation 7:9–17

7:9 After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were robed in white with palm branches in their hands. 7:10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!

7:11 All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures, and they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, 7:12 saying:

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and strength
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

7:13 Then one of the elders asked me, “Who are these people robed in white, and where did they come from?” 7:14 I said to him, “Sir, you know.”

Then he told me:

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

They washed their robes and made them white
in the blood of the Lamb.

7:15 For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and they serve Him day and night in His sanctuary.

The One seated on the throne will shelter them:

7:16 They will no longer hunger;
they will no longer thirst;
the sun will no longer strike them,
nor will any heat.

7:17 For the Lamb who is at the center of the throne

will shepherd them;
 He will guide them to springs of living waters,
 and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Only Jesus in Matthew 24:21 and John in this passage refer to a “Great Tribulation.” Based on the above observations, I think John’s use of the phrase “the great tribulation” has a different referent and sense than Jesus’ use of the term in Matthew 24. In Revelation 7:14, “the great tribulation” seems to refer to the time of suffering that Christ’s people have endured during the “Church age.” We have people coming out of it from every nation under heaven and who inherit the blessings of salvation.

For Jesus, “the great tribulation” is a time of unprecedented suffering that comes at the time of the appearing of the Lawless One/Man of Sin/Beast/Antichrist and will *precede* the coming of the Day of the Lord.

10.3.11 What is **The Day of the Lord**? And **When** does it begin?

“The Day of the Lord is thus a point in time in which God displays His sovereign initiative to reveal His control of history, of time, of His people, and of all people. . . . Whichever interpretation one makes of specific details, the Day of the Lord points to the promise that God’s eternal sovereignty over all creation and all nations will one day become crystal clear to all creatures.” (Brand, Chad et al., eds. “Day of the Lord.” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* 2003 : 397)

“In biblical thought the character or quality of a day (time period) was of greater importance than its date (the numerical quantity in a sequence). From the first mention of the expression by Amos (although some date Obadiah 15 and Joel earlier), **the notion of divine intervention, of a “God who comes” is evident.** Israel anticipated that for them God’s coming would hold favorable prospects, that it would be a day of light. Amos announces that, given Israel’s great evil, God’s coming will signal for them disappointment and calamity, a day of darkness. Predominant in the divine intervention is the awesome presence of the Almighty. It is as though God not only comes on the

scene, but fills the screen of all that is. His presence totally dominates. Human existence pales before this giant reality. On that day, “all hands will go limp, every man’s heart will melt” (Isa. 13:7). At a later time the descriptions move beyond human experience. The cosmos will go into convulsions. In stereotyped language it is said that the sun will refuse to give its light, the moon and the stars will cease to shine (Isa. 13:10). Joel, preoccupied with the subject, cites wonders in heaven and on earth, including the moon turning to blood (Joel 2:30–31).

In the New Testament the appearance of God is more distinctly the coming of Christ, specifically the return of Christ, his second coming. Paul’s mention of the “day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:8) is likely the day of “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him” (2 Thess. 2:1). Whether the day is the parousia, or the climax of history and all things as in the “day of God” when the dissolution of the heavens occurs (2 Peter 3:12), the “day” will be characterized by the unquestioned and unmistakable presence of Almighty God.

As depicted by Joel, the day of the Lord means decision: “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision” (3:14). A verdict will be rendered. God will adjudicate peoples. His decision for some nations, such as Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Philistia, and Assyria, will be punishment (Joel 3:4–13; see Zeph. 2:6–15). Divine judgment will be executed. On that day a decision will be rendered against everything proud (Isa. 2:12–18). God acts with dispatch as he judges nations in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12–13). The decision for others will have a saving dimension, for God’s promise of blessing will be activated and realized (Joel 3:18–21). (Martens, Elmer A. “Day of the Lord, God, Christ, The.” *Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology* 1996 : 146–147. Print. Baker Reference Library.)

After all that we have heard so far, we can make some observations about The Day of the Lord:

1. As we saw in part 1 of our study of the Hebrew Scriptures (*All Things Made New*), The Day of the LORD (The Day of YHWH) is a day of **Judgment** - ultimately bringing *wrath* against the Lord’s enemies and *salvation* for His people. The emphasis in most of these passages is the terror of that great Day.
(The following 18 references name the Day of YHWH specifically and give a good outline of the concept: Is 13:6, 9; 58:13; Jer 46:10; Ezek 13:5;

30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad 1:15; Zeph 1:7–8, 14; Mal 4:5)

2. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Day can reference events that were “close at hand” for the prophets and Israel (Joel 1:15), or in the distant future (Joel 2:28–32). There is a clearly marked escalation that will one day result in THE Day, when the Lord will judge *all* creation:

Isaiah 13:9–13

Look, the **day of the Lord** is coming—
cruel, with rage and burning anger—
to make the earth a desolation
and to destroy the sinners on it.

13:10 Indeed, the stars of the sky and its constellations
will not give their light.
The sun will be dark when it rises,
and the moon will not shine.

13:11 **I will bring disaster on the world,
and their own iniquity, on the wicked.
I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant
and humiliate the insolence of tyrants.**

13:12 I will make man scarcer than gold,
and mankind more rare than the gold of Ophir. 1

3:13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble,
and the earth will shake from its foundations
at the wrath of the Lord of Hosts,
on the day of His burning anger.

3. As we can see, this final, “universal” Day of the Lord will be accompanied by celestial events - the Sun, Moon and stars are darkened. Joel also includes these “signs”:

Joel 2:28–32

“And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

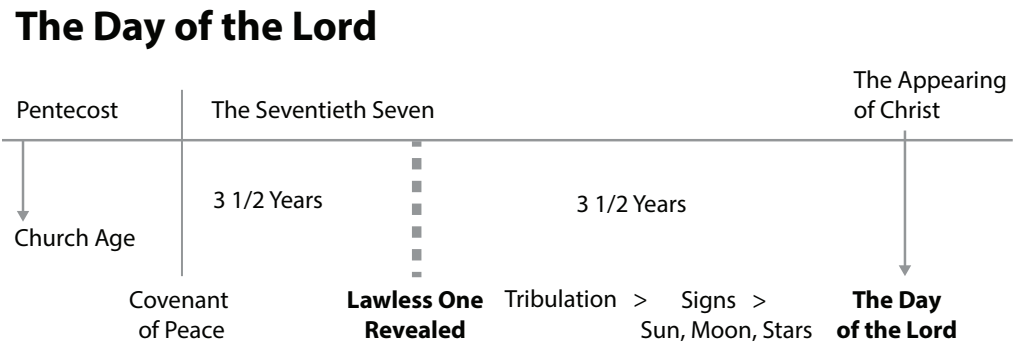
2:29 Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

2:30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. 2:31 **The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.** 2:32 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

*This passage is a key passage in the NT used by Peter and Paul to explain key events in the flow of History. For Peter, this passage explains the giving of The Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14—21).

- 4. Joel 2:20 says that the Sun will turn dark and the Moon to blood *before* the coming of the Day of the Lord. In Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24-25, and Luke 21:25, the Lord Jesus says that these signs will appear *after* the time of tribulation/suffering/affliction but before the sign of the Son of Man (*His appearing*).
- 5. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Paul states explicitly that the Day of the Lord will not come until the 1) Rebellion happens, and 2) the Man of Lawlessness is revealed.
- 6. In the book of Revelation, these signs in the Sun and Moon occur at the breaking of the 6th Seal specifically (Revelation 6:12). At the Fourth Trumpet, the Sun, Moon and Stars are darkened by 1/3 (Revelation 8:12).

With these last observations, we could generally chart things out this way linking together with other key events we have already established:



7. Remember also that Peter links the Day of the Lord with events that come at the end of Christ's rule on earth in the Premillennial view (2 Peter 3:9-13). So this final "Day" is a span of time and events that begins at the time of Christ's appearing at the end of this present age and concludes with the final judgment and the burning up of this present Heaven and Earth.
8. Finally, there is some debate if the Day of the LORD should be equated with Paul's mention of the Day of Jesus Christ in a handful of passages: 1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; Philippians 1:6. 10; 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2. *It is my view that this is Paul giving the perspective of Christ's people in the context of the coming Day of the Lord.* It is a day when 1) **Christ's people will be found blameless** and so we work with that view in mind (1 Corinthians 1:8, Philippians 1:10), 2) a time of **boasting** in our brothers and sisters in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:14, Philippians 2:16), and 3) a day when **salvation is completed** (Philippians 1:6). As we have already stated, this Day is a day in which Christ's enemies will be shamed and His people will be rewarded.

10.4 1 & 2 Corinthians

- 10.4.1 It is the faithfulness of God that will accomplish our blamelessness in the end.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

I always thank my God for you because of God's grace given to you in Christ Jesus, 1:5 that by Him you were enriched in everything—in all speech and all knowledge. 1:6 In this way, the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, 1:7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1:8 **He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 1:9 God is faithful; you were called by Him into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

10.4.2 The Saints will Judge the World.

1 Corinthians 6:1–3 If any of you has a legal dispute against another, do you dare go to court before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 6:2 **Or don't you know that the saints will judge the world?** And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest cases? 6:3 Don't you know that we will judge angels—not to mention ordinary matters?

10.4.3 The Resurrection of the Body is essential to our hope and our future. (1 Corinthians 15:12-58)

! We will look at this passage when we consider issues of *Personal Eschatology*.

10.5 Romans

10.5.1 All Creation is Hoping toward the Glory to come.

Romans 8:18–25 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. 8:19 For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it—in the hope 8:21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children. 8:22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. 8:23 And not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 8:24 Now in this hope we were saved, yet hope that is seen

is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

10.5.2 The Lord Still has plans for national, ethnic Israel.

In Romans 9, Paul deals with an important topic: what has become of Israel—the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—in their national rejection of Jesus? In Romans 8, Paul has dealt with the unshakable faithfulness of God toward His people and glories of salvation yet to come. But what of Israel?

As in the rest of the letter, Paul seems to be dealing with a potential objection to his teaching that the promises that we have *in Christ* are sure and we are secure in Him. Someone might think, “But what about Israel—the Lord promised many things related to salvation to them too and it *looks like* those promises have come to nothing.”

At the beginning of this section we see that this is a very personal issue for Paul:

Romans 9:1–8 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience is testifying to me with the Holy Spirit— 9:2 that I have intense sorrow and continual anguish in my heart. 9:3 For I could almost wish to be cursed and cut off from the Messiah for the benefit of my brothers, my own flesh and blood.

9:4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and the promises. 9:5 The ancestors are theirs, and from them, by physical descent, came the Messiah, who is God over all, praised forever. Amen.

! From this point forward in Romans, Paul makes the argument that God’s promises to Israel have not failed. He in fact has larger purposes that He is working out.

- First, not all the descendants of Abraham or Jacob (Israel) are the “children of promise.”

Romans 9:6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 9:7 Neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants. On the contrary, your offspring will be traced through Isaac. 9:8 That is, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but the children of the promise are considered to be the offspring.

- Paul then argues God is not unjust in what He does and that the outworking of His plans are not contingent on human activity, but on His mercy and grace (9:14-29):

Romans 9:16 So then it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy...

- Next, Paul deals with the fact that the Gentiles have inherited the promises of salvation even though they were not pursuing them. Israel has not received the fulfillment of the promises because they have not responded in faith (9:30-10:17):

Romans 9:30–32 What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness—namely the righteousness that comes from faith. 9:31 But Israel, pursuing the law for righteousness, has not achieved the righteousness of the law. 9:32 Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone... [Christ]

- Next, Paul asks “Maybe Israel didn’t hear the Gospel, maybe they didn’t understand?” But Paul argues they have heard, and they have rejected it because of their lack of faith (10:18-21)
- Now we get to the critical question: *Has God rejected His people Israel?*

Paul's answer is clear: ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Romans 11:1–36

I ask, then, has God rejected His people?

Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 11:2a God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew...

- Paul now argues that at the present time, the Lord has only saved a **remnant** from Israel, chosen by His grace:

Romans 11:b Or don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he pleads with God against Israel?

11:3 Lord, they have killed Your prophets

and torn down Your altars.

I am the only one left,

and they are trying to take my life!

11:4 But what was God's reply to him? I have left 7,000 men for Myself

who have not bowed down to Baal. 11:5 **In the same way, then, there**

is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. 11:6 Now if by

grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace.

- For those in Israel who rejected the Gospel, God has hardened them, just as Isaiah said:

Romans 11:7 What then? Israel did not find what it was looking for, but the elect did find it. The rest were hardened, 11:8 as it is written:

God gave them a spirit of insensitivity,

eyes that cannot see

and ears that cannot hear,

to this day.

11:9 And David says:

Let their feasting become a snare and a trap,

a pitfall and a retribution to them.

11:10 Let their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent continually.

- So has Israel's rejection led to their fall? ABSOLUTELY NOT! In fact, this was all part of the Lord's plan to take the promises to the Gentiles but also stir up Israel to jealousy.

Romans 11:11 I ask, then, have they stumbled in order to fall? Absolutely not! On the contrary, by their stumbling, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. 11:12 **Now if their stumbling brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full number bring!**

11:13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. In view of the fact that I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 11:14 if I can somehow make my own people jealous and save some of them. 11:15 **For if their rejection brings reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?**

! I think this last statement by Paul is one of the most important ones in this section. *He clearly implies here that there will be a time when Israel accepts the promises and brings fuller blessing to the world!*

- Paul now warns the Gentiles not to become conceited in their place of blessing but to remember that they were “grafted in” to the promises. The “Root” still belongs to Israel!

Romans 11:16 Now if the firstfruits offered up are holy, so is the whole batch. And if the root is holy, so are the branches. 11:17 Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them and have come to share in the rich root of the cultivated olive tree, 11:18 do not brag that you are better than those branches. But if you do brag—you do not sustain the root, but the root sustains you.

11:19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be

grafted in.” 11:20 True enough; **they were broken off by unbelief, but you stand by faith.** Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 11:21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either. 11:22 Therefore, consider God’s kindness and severity: severity toward those who have fallen but God’s kindness toward you—if you remain in His kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. 11:23 **And even they, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted in, because God has the power to graft them in again.** 11:24 For if you were cut off from your native wild olive and against nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these—the natural branches—be grafted into their own olive tree?

- A partial hardening has come to Israel and it will last till “the full number of Gentiles come in.” Then, all Israel will be saved when Jesus comes to remove their godlessness from them.

Romans 11:25 So that you will not be conceited, brothers, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery: A partial hardening has come to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 11:26 **And in this way all Israel will be saved**, as it is written:

The Liberator will come from Zion;
He will turn away godlessness from Jacob.

11:27 And this will be My covenant with them
when I take away their sins.

- ! In 11:26 the phrase in Greek “and so” can either be translated as referring to *means* “so in this way...” or to *time*, “and then...” Ultimately, whichever way it is take it still points to the same reality: God’s plan of salvation was to partially harden Israel, bring the Gentiles in, then save “all Israel.”

Some replacement theologians have tried to argue that “all Israel” here means the Church: Jew and Gentile united in Christ.

However, the whole context argues strongly against this view. Leon Morris' comments are helpful here:

“But some exegetes understand Israel here of the nation while others see it as referring to spiritual Israel, the people of God whether Jewish or Gentile (so Calvin). Lenski has a strong argument for the elect Jews. But what seems decisive is the fact that “Israel” in verse 25 plainly means the nation (it is physical Israel, not spiritual Israel, that is hardened in part), and it is not easy to understand why in the next line it should have a different meaning (Hodge has a strong argument for this position). A further strong argument is that Paul has just said that this is a “mystery”. Now it is no “mystery” that all the elect, Jews as well as Gentiles, will be saved. Nor is the conversion of a few Jews in each generation such as has happened until now the kind of thing that needs to be the subject of a special revelation. That looks for a very different kind of happening. It may also be argued that Paul is looking for the restoration of the Jews in the sense in which they had been rejected, that is, the nation generally. Paul then is affirming that the nation of Israel as a whole will ultimately have its place in God's salvation. This may well be located in the end time and be part of the eschatological program that Paul anticipates then.” (Morris, Leon. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988. Print. *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*.)

- Israel is loved for the sake of the Patriarchs and so will be shown mercy!

Romans 11:28 Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your advantage, but regarding election, they are loved because of the patriarchs, 11:29 **since God's gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable.** 11:30 As you once disobeyed God, but now have received mercy through their disobedience, 11:31 **so they too have now disobeyed, resulting in mercy to you, so that they also now may receive mercy.** 11:32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience, so that He may have mercy on all.

- ! Here, it is important to remember a key point we made while looking at Abraham and the promises given to him. Abraham's

family was blessed **because** of Abraham's faithfulness. This is the way the Lord God works: *blessing comes to many for the sake of one person's faithfulness*. And so God's promises are made sure.

- Paul concludes with an outburst of praise for God's unsearchable wisdom!

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches

both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!

How unsearchable His judgments

and untraceable His ways!

11:34 For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been His counselor?

11:35 Or who has ever first given to Him, and has to be repaid?

11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

10.5.3 Salvation is near - we must live soberly.

Romans 13:10–14

Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law. 13:11 Besides this, knowing the time, **it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.** 13:12 The night is nearly over, and the daylight is near, so let us discard the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13:13 Let us walk with decency, as in the daylight: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires.

10.5.4 Paul alludes to the promises rooted in Genesis 3:15:

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

10.6 **Hebrews**

10.6.1 In Hebrews 3:12–4:11, the writer argues that there is a day of “Rest” that is still in the future for God’s people. We must all strive to enter that “Rest.” The day of “Rest” is a way of talking about the completion of salvation.

10.6.2 In the end, the Lord will “shake” all creation in order to make room for what cannot be “shaken”—the Kingdom.

Hebrews 12:26–29 His voice shook the earth at that time, but now He has promised, Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven. 12:27 This expression, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain. 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, 12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.

10.7 1 Peter

10.7.1 We are protected through our faith for a salvation that will be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3–9 Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 1:4 **and into an inheritance that is imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.** 1:5 You are being protected by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 1:6 You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to struggle in various trials 1:7 so that the genuineness of your faith—more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1:8 You love Him, though you have not seen Him. And though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, 1:9 **because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

! Peter, like Jesus, tends to think of salvation as something that is *yet to be completed*. Father-God is protecting us by means of His power through the instrument of our faith and so we are secure, but we are looking toward the completion of our salvation and the inheritance to come.

10.7.2 Knowing how things end, and that the end is near motivates us to prayer.

1 Peter 4:7 Now the end of all things is near; therefore, be serious and disciplined for prayer.

10.7.3 Judgment begins with the Household of God.

1 Peter 4:12–19

Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. 4:13 Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of the Messiah, so that you may also rejoice with great joy at the revelation of His glory. 4:14 If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 4:15 None of you, however, should suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. 4:16 But if anyone suffers as a "Christian," he should not be ashamed but should glorify God in having that name. 4:17 **For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household**, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

4:18 And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

4:19 So those who suffer according to God's will should, while doing what is good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator.

! Judgment begins with the household of God

10.8 Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians

10.8.1 In the End, all things will be "summed up" in Christ.

Ephesians 1:7–10

We have redemption in Him [Christ] through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 1:8 that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 1:9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure that He planned in Him 1:10 for the administration of

the days of fulfillment—**to bring everything together** [**to head up, sum up**] **in the Messiah**, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him.

! The word that Paul uses here that is translated as “bring together”, “sum up” has the word “head” as part of its root. With all of Paul’s discussion of Christ being “Head” of all things, I think it is appropriate to translated this as “*head up all things in Christ...*”

10.8.2 In the End, EVERYONE will submit to Jesus
to the glory of the Father.

Philippians 2:5–11

Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,

2:6 who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be used for His own advantage.

2:7 Instead He emptied Himself
by assuming the form of a slave,
taking on the likeness of men.
And when He had come as a man
in His external form,

2:8 He humbled Himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.

2:9 For this reason God highly exalted Him
and gave Him the name
that is above every name,

2:10 so that at the name of Jesus

every knee will bow—
 of those who are in heaven and on earth
 and under the earth—
 2:11 and every tongue should confess
 that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.

10.9 Titus

10.9.1 Our “blessed hope” is the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:11–14 For the grace of God has appeared with salvation for all people, 2:12 instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, 2:13 **while we wait for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.** 2:14 He gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a people for His own possession, eager to do good works.

! Take note of how many times Paul links “glory” with the appearing of Christ. For believers, Christ’s appearing will be a time of great joy and wonder, not something to be feared.

10.10 **2 Timothy**

10.10.1 In the Last Days, difficult times will come as people rebel against all that is good and true. (*This may be part of the Apostasy/Rebellion that Paul refers to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3*)

2 Timothy 3:1–5 But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. 3:2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3:3 unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, 3:4 traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 3:5 holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people!

10.10.2 The expectation of Jesus' appearing motivates to proclaiming and teaching Truth.

2 Timothy 4:1–2 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of His appearing and His kingdom: 4:2 Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.

10.11 2 Peter, Jude

10.11.1 The condemnation of false teachers has already been pronounced and will come.

2 Peter 2:1–3 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. 2:2 Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and the way of truth will be blasphemed because of them. 2:3 They will exploit you in their greed with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.

! This passage may be describing an aspect of what Paul refers to a “the rebellion/apostasy” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 that precedes the Day of the Lord. I would argue that Paul sees an escalation of this false teaching in the last days (as does Jesus) so that it is widespread among those who *claim* to be Christ’s people.

10.11.2 In the Last Days, scoffers will come neglecting the Lord’s Word. (*This may be part of the Apostasy/Rebellion that Paul refers to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3*)

2 Peter 3:1–18 Dear friends, this is now the second letter I have written to you; in both letters, I want to develop a genuine understanding with a reminder, 3:2 so that you can remember the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles. 3:3 First, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days to scoff, living according to their own desires, 3:4 saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? Ever since the fathers fell

asleep, all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation.”

10.11.3 Just as the ancient world was destroyed by water, the present world will be destroyed by fire.

2 Peter 3:5 They willfully ignore this: Long ago the heavens and the earth were brought about from water and through water by the word of God. 3:6 Through these waters the world of that time perished when it was flooded.

3:7 **But by the same word**, the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

10.11.4 The Lord has His own timing and purposes.

2 Peter 3:8 Dear friends, don't let this one thing escape you: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 3:9 The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

10.11.5 The Day of the Lord will come unexpectedly.

2 Peter 3:10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed.

10.11.6 Knowing the End motivates the Lord's people to holy, godly living in the present.

2Peter 3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness 3:12 as you wait for and earnestly desire [hasten] the coming of the day of God. The heavens will be on fire and be dissolved because of it, and the elements will melt with the heat. 3:13 But based on His promise, we wait for the new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell.

10.11.7 The patience of the Lord is a motivation for peace and salvation.

2Peter 3:14 Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found at peace with Him without spot or blemish. 3:15 Also, regard the patience of our Lord as an opportunity for salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. 3:16 He speaks about these things in all his letters in which there are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

10.11.8 We should be on guard against false teachers, but grow into the grace and knowledge of Christ.

2Peter 3:17 Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stability. 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

10.12 1-3 John

! With the texts of John's letters and Jude we are transitioning into the texts related to *Personal Eschatology*.

10.12.1 The things of this present World are passing away.

1 John 2:15–17, 28 Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. 2:16 For everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world. 2:17 **And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever. ...**

2:28 So now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

10.12.2 The Hope of our final transformation is seeing Jesus when He appears.

1 John 3:1–3 Look at how great a love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children. And we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know Him. 3:2 **Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is.** 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

! This passage fills out and completes the admonitions all throughout the New Testament to “keep our eyes on Jesus.” *We become what or WHO we focus on. Or “we become who we behold”* to use an old phrase.

10.13 Jude

Jude 1:24–25 Now to Him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen.

! Once again, the responsibility for the completion of our salvation rests with God our Savior, working through Jesus Christ!

11 Personal Eschatology

! In this section of the study, I am going to break from the method we have been using. Instead of moving through the texts in chronological order (taking progressive revelation into account), we are going to organize these final texts *topically*.

Personal eschatology deals with what the Bible teaches about the destiny of humans at death or the Lord Jesus' return. *Life in this present age and on this earth is temporary*. So what comes next for us as individuals and as humanity in general.

11.1 For Those "In Christ," We have Hope: Father-God Will Save us In Christ Completely through the Holy Spirit!

11.1.1 The relationships we have with others in Christ, especially those we have served, become the basis of our hope, joy, and boasting at Christ's coming.

1 Thessalonians 2:18–20 So we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. 2:19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Is it not you? 2:20 For you are our glory and joy!

11.1.2 Father God will be faithful to complete His saving work in us, to sanctify us and make us blameless at Christ's coming.

1 Thessalonians 3:11–13 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you. 3:12 And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with love for one another and for everyone, just as we also do for you. 3:13 **May He make your hearts blameless in holi-**

ness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 5:24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

Colossians 1:21–23 Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds because of your evil actions. 1:22 **But now He has reconciled you by His physical body through His death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before Him—** 1:23 if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become a servant of it.

Philippians 1:6 I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

11.1.3 At Christ's coming, He will bring our salvation to completion.

Hebrews 9:27–28 And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment— 9:28 so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

- 11.1.4 The Holy Spirit has sealed us, protecting us for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 1:13–14 When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. 1:14 He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession, **to the praise of His glory.**

! Particularly in Ephesians, Father-God's saving work, displayed in and through us—His people—is meant to give evidence to His glorious grace, “so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7). *The Lord-God's reputation is completely interlocked with the completion of our salvation.*

- 11.1.5 We are citizens of Heaven and wait for Christ to transform our bodies to be like His glorious, resurrected body.

Philippians 3:17–21 Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. 3:18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 3:19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, 3:20 but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 3:21 **He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.**

11.1.6 Father-God has enabled us to share in the saints inheritance of light.

Colossians 1:9–14

For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 1:10 so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. 1:11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience, with joy 1:12 **giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.** 1:13 He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. 1:14 We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him.

11.1.7 We will be revealed with Christ in glory.

Colossians 3:1–4

So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. 3:2 Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. 3:3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. 3:4 **When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

11.2 There is a **Day of Judgment** coming for everyone in which we must all give an account of our time on Earth.

11.2.1 Father-God has set a day on which He will judge the World in righteousness, by Christ.

Acts 17:30–31 “Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, 17:31 because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

Key Definition: Righteous/Righteousness - Doing the 1) right thing, 2) in the right way, 3) at the right time, 4) with right motives.

11.2.2 Everyones works will be tested by fire.

1 Corinthians 3:9–15 For we are God’s coworkers. You are God’s field, God’s building. 3:10 According to God’s grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it. 3:11 For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. 3:12 If anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, 3:13 each one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. 3:14 If anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. 3:15 If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

! The significance of what Paul is saying here is that good works will result in rewards, whereas useless works will be “burned up.” *Yet this loss of rewards does not negate salvation.*

11.2.3 We should keep our eyes on the prize and live in a focused, disciplined way.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 Don’t you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. 9:25 Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away. 9:26 Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. 9:27 Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

11.2.4 We must all appear before Christ’s judgment seat and so we should make it our goal to be pleasing to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:1–11 For we know that if our temporary, earthly dwelling is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not made with hands. 5:2 Indeed, we groan in this body, desiring to put on our dwelling from heaven, 5:3 since, when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 5:4 Indeed, we groan while we are in this tent, burdened as we are, because we do not want to be unclothed but clothed, so that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

5:5 And the One who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. 5:6 So, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight, 5:8 and we are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with the Lord.

! The Intermediate State: Where does this passage fit?

**We will discuss this further in the section on the Resurrection of the Body.*

11.2.5 We must all appear before Christ's judgment seat and so we should make it our goal to be pleasing to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore, whether we are at home or away, **we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him.** 5:10 For we must all appear before the tribunal [judgment seat] of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless [evil].

5:11 Therefore, because we know the fear of the Lord, we seek to persuade people. We are completely open before God, and I hope we are completely open to your consciences as well.

11.2.6 In the end, everyone will be recompensed according to his or her works whether good or bad.

Romans 2:5-10 But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed. 2:6 He will repay each one accord-

ing to his works: 2:7 eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; 2:8 but wrath and indignation to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth but are obeying unrighteousness; 2:9 affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; 2:10 but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

11.2.7 Father-God will judge all justly on the basis of His commands and also through the witness of the conscience.

Romans 2:11 There is no favoritism with God. 2:12 All those who sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all those who sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 2:13 For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous.

2:14 So, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, instinctively do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. 2:15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts will either accuse or excuse them 2:16 on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

! The Witness of the Conscience

11.2.8 There are virtues we can practice and grow in which will guarantee a rich a rich entrance into The Kingdom.

2 Peter 1:1–11 Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. 1:2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 1:3 His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. 1:4 By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires.

1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, 1:6 knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, 1:7 godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1:9 The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.

1:10 Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. 1:11 For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly supplied to you.

11.3 The Resurrection

11.3.1 In the end, everyone will be resurrected—
some to life, some to judgment.

Daniel 12:1–3 At that time

Michael the great prince
who stands watch over your people will rise up.
There will be a time of distress
such as never has occurred
since nations came into being until that time.
But at that time all your people
who are found written in the book will escape.

12:2 Many of those who sleep in the dust
of the earth will awake,
some to eternal life,
and some to shame and eternal contempt.

12:3 Those who are wise will shine
like the bright expanse of the heavens,
and those who lead many to righteousness,
like the stars forever and ever.

John 5:25–29 “I assure you: An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 5:26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have life in Himself. 5:27 And He has granted Him the right to pass judgment, because He is the Son of Man. 5:28 Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice 5:29 and come out—those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of judgment.

11.3.2 The Resurrection of the Body is essential to our hope and our future. (1 Corinthians 15:12-58)

1 Corinthians 15:12–58 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, “There is no resurrection of the dead”? 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 15:14 **and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is without foundation, and so is your faith.** 15:15 In addition, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified about God that He raised up Christ—whom He did not raise up if in fact the dead are not raised. 15:16 For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised. 15:17 **And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.** 15:18 Therefore, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. 15:19 If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

11.3.3 There is an order to the Resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 15:21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. 15:23 But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at His coming, those who belong to Christ. 15:24 Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when He abolishes all rule and all authority and power. 15:25 For He must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. 15:26 The last enemy to be abolished is death.

! Some see in this passage three stages of Resurrection:

1) Christ the firstfruits, 2) those who belong to Christ at His

appearing, and 3) a final resurrection at the End when the Kingdom is turned over to the Father.

11.3.4 In the end, all things will be subjected to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:27 For God has put everything under His feet. But when it says “everything” is put under Him, it is obvious that He who puts everything under Him is the exception. 15:28 And when everything is subject to Christ, then the Son Himself will also be subject to the One who subjected everything to Him, so that God may be all in all.

11.3.5 Our resurrected bodies will be spiritual bodies, incorruptible, glorious, and powerful.

1 Corinthians 15:35 But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?” 15:36 Foolish one! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 15:37 And as for what you sow—you are not sowing the future body, but only a seed, perhaps of wheat or another grain. 15:38 But God gives it a body as He wants, and to each of the seeds its own body. 15:39 Not all flesh is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 15:40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. 15:41 There is a splendor of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; for one star differs from another star in splendor. 15:42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead:

Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption;
15:43 sown in dishonor, raised in glory;
sown in weakness, raised in power;

15:44 sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.
If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

11.3.6 We have borne the dusty image of Adam, but we will bear
the heavenly image of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:45 So it is written: The first man Adam became
a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. 15:46 However,
the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual.

15:47 The first man was from the earth and made of dust;
the second man is from heaven.

15:48 Like the man made of dust,
so are those who are made of dust;
like the heavenly man,
so are those who are heavenly.

15:49 And just as we have borne
the image of the man made of dust,
we will also bear the image of the heavenly man.

11.3.7 Because God has given us complete victory over all things in Christ, we should know that our labors are not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Brothers, I tell you this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption.

15:51 Listen! I am telling you a mystery:

We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, 15:52 in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

15:53 For this corruptible must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal must be clothed with immortality. 15:54 When this corruptible is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal is clothed with immortality,

then the saying that is written will take place: Death has been swallowed up in victory. 15:55 Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? 15:56 Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

15:58 **Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.**

12 Some Resources for Further Study

*Benware, Paul N. *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach*.

If I were going to recommend just one source for those interested in Eschatology, this would be the book. It is organized clearly, easy to read, and touches on all the important issues that should be addressed.

Bock, Darrell (Editor) with Stanley N. Gundry, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., Robert B.

Strimple, Craig A. Blaising. *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*.

Another good discussion of the different views on Revelation 20 and it's implications for eschatology.

Clouse, Robert G. (Editor), with George Eldon Ladd, Anthony A. Hoekema, Herman A.

Lloyd, Loraine Boettner. *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*.

A very good discussion of the different views on the 1000 years of Revelation 20 and it's implications for eschatology. *This one has a very good treatment of the differences between Historic Premillennialism and Dispensational Premillennialism.

Dumbrell, William J. *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus*.

Although I would disagree with some of Dumbrell's conclusions, this work is very helpful for those who wish to develop a holistic Eschatology.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*.

This work is a complete systematic theology but his section on Eschatology is very well done.

Fruchtenbaum, Arnold. *The Footsteps of Messiah*.

One of the most comprehensive treatments of Dispensational eschatology.

Hoekema, Anthony. *The Bible and the Future*.

This has been one of the standard works from the Reformed (Amillennial) view.

Kaiser, Walter C. *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New*

Testaments. Although not strictly dealing with eschatology, this work has been very helpful to me in developing a holistic, biblical approach.

_____. *The Messiah in the Old Testament*.

Rhodes, Ron. *The End Times in Chronological Order*.

A fairly brief and east to read treatment that touches on most of the major issues.

Ryrie, Charles. *Dispensationalism*.

For those who want to know more about the distinctives of Dispensational Theology and how it differs from Covenant Theology.

Walvoord, John. *Every Prophecy of the Bible*. 3rd Edition.

A great resource that lists all the major prophecies of the Bible.

