

GOD'S PROPHETICAL PROGRAM FOR THE AGES

A Complete Systematic Outline of Biblical Eschatology

Based on Pentecost's Things to Come

With contributions from Chafer, Walvoord, and Ryrie

*Including the Ryrie Study Bible (FGR), the Bible Knowledge Commentary (BKC),
and Institutional Sources: Bible.org • Faithalone.org • Insight for Living • Urban Alternative*

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”

Revelation 22:20 (NASB 2020)

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I. INTRODUCTION — THE BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Scripture does not present history as a random sequence of human events but as the unfolding of God's eternal, sovereign decree. Every era, empire, and individual act within time moves toward a predetermined consummation. The prophetic program of Scripture is the spine of that movement.^{1,4}

A. God's Eternal Decree and Sovereign Purpose

Before time began, God determined all that would come to pass. This decree is not fatalism but the expression of His perfect wisdom and love, unfolding through the free choices of moral creatures.^{6,2}

- Eph 1:11 — He works all things after the counsel of His will (boulē tou thelēmatos)⁶
- Acts 15:18 — Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world
- Rom 11:36 — For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things
- Isa 46:9–10 — He declares the end from the beginning; His counsel stands

i Ryrie Study Bible note on Eph 1:11: The Greek boulē ("counsel") denotes a deliberate, reasoned decision. God's decree is not arbitrary will but the expression of His perfect, all-knowing character. It comprehends all events without making God the author of sin.

B. Progressive Revelation and the Dispensational Framework

God's single eternal plan is administered through successive dispensations (oikonomia — "stewardship" or "management"). Each dispensation is a distinct economy under which God tests man under particular conditions, man fails, and God judges and advances His program.^{5,7}

- Eph 3:2; Col 1:25 — the dispensation (oikonomia) of God's grace entrusted to Pauls
- Seven major dispensations: Innocence (Eden), Conscience, Human Government, Promise (Abraham), Law (Sinai), Grace (Church Age), Kingdom (Millennium)
- Each dispensation ends in human failure and divine judgment, yet advances God's redemptive purpose toward the consummation
 - Innocence: Adam's failure → the Fall and expulsion
 - Law: Israel's failure → exile and the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24)
 - Grace: The Church Age ends at the Rapture; human civilization collapses into Tribulation
 - Kingdom: Post-Millennium rebellion demonstrates man's final incorrigibility

i Ryrie (*Dispensationalism*, p. 28) defines a dispensation as "a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose." Three essential elements mark each: a revelation of God's will, a period of human testing, and a judgment on failure. This framework is not invented — it is embedded in the structure of Scripture itself.

C. Hermeneutical Foundation: Consistent Literal Interpretation

The interpretive method that governs this entire prophetic outline is the historical-grammatical, consistently literal method championed by Dallas Theological Seminary and the dispensational tradition. Prophetic Scripture is interpreted by the same rules as all other biblical literature.^{5,1}

- When the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense (Dr. David L. Cooper's Golden Rule of Interpretation)
- Prophecy fulfilled at the First Advent was fulfilled literally and precisely (Mic 5:2; Isa 7:14; Zech 9:9; 11:12–13)
- The same hermeneutic applied to fulfilled prophecy must be applied to unfulfilled prophecy
- Rejection of allegorization, typological reinterpretation, and replacement theology

► The distinction between Israel and the Church is the critical test of literal interpretation. Once the Church is identified as "spiritual Israel," the entire prophetic program collapses into allegory, and Daniel's 70 weeks lose all chronological precision.

D. The Four Unconditional Covenants and One Conditional Covenant — The Foundation of Old Testament Eschatology

God's prophetic program rests on five specific covenants with Israel. Four are unconditional and eternal — their fulfillment depends solely on God's sovereign oath, not on Israel's obedience. The fifth, the Mosaic Covenant, is explicitly conditional, temporary, and has been declared obsolete by the New Testament. The distinction between these two categories is theologically foundational: the four unconditional covenants guarantee a future national restoration of Israel regardless of her faithfulness; the Mosaic Covenant does not.^{27,29}

1. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1–3; 15; 17)

The foundational covenant of all redemptive history. God makes three unconditional promises to Abraham: land, seed, and blessing. The covenant is ratified in Gen 15 by God alone passing between the pieces — Abraham was in a deep sleep, unable to participate. This unilateralism establishes its unconditional character.^{27,28}

- Land: A specific geographic territory from the Nile to the Euphrates (Gen 15:18–21) — never yet fully possessed
- Seed: Both a national seed (the Jewish people) and an individual seed (the Messiah, Gal 3:16)
- Blessing: Universal blessing through Abraham's descendant — “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen 12:3)
- Eternal and unconditional: “An everlasting covenant” (Gen 17:7); the oath of God (Heb 6:17–18)

2. The Palestinian (Land) Covenant (Deut 30:1–10)

This covenant expands the land promise of the Abrahamic covenant. Even the prospect of disobedience and dispersion does not nullify the land grant — God guarantees Israel's eventual return, repentance, and full possession of the land.²⁷

- Even if Israel is scattered to the ends of the earth, God will gather them (Deut 30:4)
- The restoration is conditioned on repentance, but the covenant guarantee of restoration is not conditioned on it
- Fulfilled in part in the return from Babylon; awaits full fulfillment at the Second Coming

3. The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:12–16; Ps 89:3–4, 28–37)

God promises David an eternal dynasty, throne, and kingdom. The covenant is explicitly called “everlasting” (2 Sam 23:5) and is sworn by God's holiness (Ps 89:35). No failure of David's descendants can annul it.^{27,3}

- A throne: the literal throne of David in Jerusalem
- A King: Jesus Christ is the ultimate heir (Luke 1:32–33; Acts 2:30–31; Rev 3:7)
- Fulfilled in the Church Age in Christ's spiritual reign; consummated in the Millennial Kingdom when He reigns literally from Jerusalem (Isa 9:6–7)

i Ryrie Study Bible note on 2 Sam 7:16: The promise is to David's house (dynasty), throne (authority), and kingdom (realm) forever. The Davidic Covenant is the specific basis for the Millennial reign of Christ. To spiritualize this as merely the Church is to evacuate the plain meaning of the oath.

4. The New Covenant (Jer 31:31–34; Ezek 36:24–32)

The New Covenant promises Israel a transformed heart, indwelling Spirit, forgiveness of sins, and universal knowledge of God. It replaces the Mosaic Covenant, which was conditional and external. The covenant is made explicitly with “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (Jer 31:31).²⁷

- The Church participates in the New Covenant through Christ the Mediator (Luke 22:20; Heb 8–10)
- But the covenant's full national application to Israel awaits the Second Coming and the 70th Week's close
- National regeneration: “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it” (Jer 31:33)
- National forgiveness: “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer 31:34)

5. The Mosaic Covenant — CONDITIONAL (contrast with the four above)

The Mosaic Covenant stands apart from the four unconditional covenants in every essential respect. It is bilateral (both parties obligated), conditional (Israel's blessing depends on obedience), and temporary (declared obsolete by the New Testament). Its purpose was never to provide righteousness or guarantee Israel's future —

that is the role of the unconditional covenants. The Mosaic Covenant was the administration of the Law, given to reveal sin and point Israel to the need for a Mediator.

- Conditional and bilateral: “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession” (Exod 19:5–8) — the “if” makes it explicitly conditioned on Israel’s response
- Israel immediately violated it (Exod 32 — the golden calf) before Moses descended the mountain with the tablets — demonstrating that no covenant resting on human faithfulness can guarantee God’s prophetic program
- The writer of Hebrews explicitly declares it obsolete (Heb 8:13): “When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete; but whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear”
- Its purpose: to reveal sin (Rom 3:20), act as a tutor leading to Christ (Gal 3:19–25), and demonstrate that no human effort can produce the righteousness God requires
- It does NOT nullify the Abrahamic Covenant: “The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise” (Gal 3:17)

► *The critical doctrinal point: Israel's failure to keep the Mosaic Covenant does not and cannot annul the four unconditional covenants. God's promises of land (Abrahamic/Palestinian), throne (Davidic), and spiritual regeneration (New Covenant) rest entirely on His own oath, not on Israel's performance. This is why a future national restoration of Israel is guaranteed despite her centuries of unfaithfulness.*

II. DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS — ISRAEL'S COMPLETE PROPHETIC CALENDAR

Daniel 9:24–27 is the most precisely dated prophecy in all of Scripture. It provides God's comprehensive chronological framework for Israel's future: a 490-year program divided into three sequential periods, culminating in the establishment of Messiah's eternal Kingdom. No passage is more foundational to the dispensational understanding of prophecy.^{18,8,14}

A. The Context: Daniel's Prayer and the Jeremiah Connection

The year is approximately 539–538 BC. Babylon has fallen to Darius the Mede (Dan 9:1). Daniel — deported from Jerusalem as a teenager in 605 BC — is now an elderly statesman reading Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70-year exile.²⁵

- Jer 25:11–12 — The land would lie desolate; Israel would serve Babylon “seventy years”
- Jer 29:10 — After seventy years God would “visit” Israel and bring them back to Jerusalem
- Daniel understands from his reading that the 70 years are nearly complete (Dan 9:2–3)
- His response: fasting, sackcloth, ashes — a full posture of national mourning and intercession

i *Sabbath-year connection: Lev 26:34–35 and 2 Chr 36:21 reveal that the 70-year exile equaled the accumulated Sabbath years Israel had failed to observe during the 490-year period of the monarchy. Gabriel's answer of $70 \times 7 = 490$ additional years mirrors this: Israel violated 490 years of law; God decrees 490 more years for complete restoration.*

Daniel's prayer (Dan 9:3–19) is a masterwork of intercessory theology: thorough confession of national sin, appeal to God's covenant character, acknowledgment that the exile was righteous judgment, and an urgent petition for restoration — not on the basis of Israel's merit but on the basis of God's great mercies (Dan 9:18) and His own name's honor (Dan 9:19).

While Daniel is still praying, Gabriel arrives “in swift flight” (Dan 9:21). God's answer comes before the prayer is finished. Daniel is addressed as *chamudot* — “highly esteemed / greatly beloved” (also Dan 10:11, 19). The answer transcends the immediate question of when Israel returns from Babylon. It reveals the full prophetic program through the Messianic age.

B. Daniel 9:24 — The Overview: The 490 Years and Six Divine Purposes

Dan 9:24 (NASB 2020) *“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and for your holy city, to finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place.”*

The Term “Seventy Weeks” (Hebrew: *Shib'im Shabu'im*)

The Hebrew *shabu'a* means “a seven” — a group of seven units. Context determines the unit. Three indicators establish that years, not days, are meant:^{8,26}

- Daniel was thinking in years (Jeremiah's 70 years); Gabriel answers proportionally: 70×7 years = 490 years
- Sabbatical-year background (Lev 25:1–7): Israel counted seven-year cycles; a *shabu'a* of years was a familiar unit
- The events described (temple rebuilt, Messiah comes, city destroyed) require centuries, not 490 days
- Lev 25:8 uses the same construction: “seven sabbaths of years” = 49 years — confirming the year-week equivalence

The Subjects: “Your People” and “Your Holy City”

The 490 years are explicitly decreed for Daniel's people (ethnic, national Israel) and Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem). This is not addressed to the Church. The Church is described in Eph 3:4–6 as a mystery “not made

known to the sons of men in other generations.” Any interpretation that transfers these 490 years to the Church violates the plain address of the text.^{18,8}

The Six Purposes — Three Negative, Three Positive

Six divine purposes govern the entire 490-year program. They divide into two triplets: the removal of sin (negative) and the establishment of righteousness (positive). Together they describe Israel's complete redemption and the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom.^{18,14}

#	Purpose (Dan 9:24 NASB)	Nature	Fulfillment & Notes
1	Finish / restrain the transgression	Negative — Israel's persistent national rebellion	National conversion of Israel at the Second Coming ends the transgression of rejecting Messiah (Zech 12:10; Rom 11:26). Not yet complete.
2	Put an end to (seal up) sin	Negative — dominion of sin over the nation	The New Covenant brings Israel's regeneration, breaking sin's dominion (Jer 31:33–34; Ezek 36:27). Awaits the 70th week's close.
3	Make atonement for iniquity	Negative — guilt requiring propitiation	Accomplished at Calvary (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:26). The foundation is complete; its national application to Israel is future.
4	Bring in everlasting righteousness	Positive — Messianic righteousness established permanently	Imputed righteousness through Christ inaugurated now; consummated in the Millennial Kingdom (Jer 23:6; Isa 9:7; Rev 20:1–6).
5	Seal up vision and prophecy	Positive — authentication and completion of all prophecy	All OT prophecy finds its fulfillment; the prophetic program for Israel is concluded. No further revelation needed.
6	Anoint the Most Holy Place	Positive — consecration of the eschatological sanctuary	The anointing of the Millennial Temple (Ezek 40–48) when God's glory returns (Ezek 43:1–5). Possibly also refers to the anointing of Christ Himself.

i Pentecost and Walvoord note that purposes 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 remain unfulfilled or only partially fulfilled today. Atonement (purpose 3) was accomplished at Calvary; its national application to Israel awaits the 70th Week's close. This confirms that the 70th Week is still future.

C. Daniel 9:25 — The Starting Point: "From the Going Forth of the Word"

Dan 9:25 (NASB 2020) “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”

The phrase “to restore and build Jerusalem” (Hebrew: shub — to restore, return, rebuild) requires a decree that addresses both the physical reconstruction of the city and the restoration of its civic and political life. The phrase “plaza and moat” (rechob and charutz) refers explicitly to public infrastructure and defensive works.^{18,25}

The Four Candidate Decrees — Why Only Nehemiah 2 Qualifies

Four Persian royal decrees could potentially serve as the terminus a quo (starting point). Three are disqualified by the specific language of Daniel 9:25. Only the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah satisfies every criterion.^{18,8,16}

#	King	Date	Reference	Content — Why It Does NOT Qualify as the Terminus A Quo
1	Cyrus II	538 BC	Ezra 1:1–4 2 Chr 36:23	Authorized return and rebuilding of the TEMPLE only (“build Him a house at Jerusalem”). No mention of walls, gates, or civic restoration. 538 BC + 483 solar years = 56 BC — no Messianic event fits. Jerusalem's walls remained in ruins until Nehemiah (Neh 1:3).

2	Darius I	520 BC	Ezra 6:6–12	Reconfirmed the Cyrus temple decree after Samaritan opposition. Focused on the "house of God," not the city. No viable timeline forward to a Messianic terminus. Jerusalem still ruined 74 years later (Neh 1:3).
3	Artaxerxes to Ezra	457 BC	Ezra 7:11–26	Addressed temple worship, sacrifices, and judicial administration. The explicit focus is "the house of your God" (Ezra 7:17, 23). Ezra never attempted to rebuild the city walls. Nehemiah 1:3, written after Ezra's return, still reports walls broken down. Minority view: 457 BC → AD 27 (Jesus' baptism) uses solar years and is preferred by some non-dispensational scholars.
4 ✓	Artaxerxes to Nehemiah	444 BC (Nisan 1)	Neh 2:1–8	SOLE QUALIFYING DECREE. Explicitly authorized: (1) rebuilding Jerusalem's WALLS; (2) gates of the citadel; (3) timber for the city. Language matches Dan 9:25 exactly: "plaza and moat" (street and wall-trench). Rebuilding occurred under armed opposition (Neh 4–6) = "times of distress." 444 BC + 173,880 prophetic days = Nisan 10, AD 33 — the Triumphal Entry.

Detailed Refutation: Why the Cyrus Decree (538 BC) Does Not Qualify

- Cyrus's decree (Ezra 1:1–4; 2 Chr 36:23) explicitly authorizes rebuilding the temple: "build Him a house at Jerusalem" — not the city or its walls
- No mention of walls, gates, moat, or any civic infrastructure
- 538 BC + 483 solar years = 56 BC — no Messianic event fits this date
- Most decisively: Nehemiah 1:3 (written decades after Cyrus) still reports Jerusalem's walls "broken down" and gates "burned with fire" — proving Cyrus's decree produced no city restoration

Detailed Refutation: Why the Ezra Decree (457 BC) Does Not Qualify

- Artaxerxes' decree to Ezra (Ezra 7:11–26) focused on temple worship, sacrificial provisions, and judicial administration of the Law
- The explicit mandate: "for the house of your God" (Ezra 7:17, 19, 23) — temple language, not city language
- Ezra never attempted to rebuild the city walls; that task awaited Nehemiah's separate commission
- Neh 1:3 (written after Ezra's return) still describes the walls as destroyed — Ezra's decree had not addressed them
- Minority view: 457 BC + 483 solar years = AD 27 (Jesus' baptism); preferred by some non-dispensational scholars. But this uses solar, not prophetic, years and requires the terminus to be the baptism rather than the Triumphal Entry

► *Refutation test: Nehemiah 1:3 is written after Ezra's return. Jerusalem's walls are still broken down and gates burned. A decree that predates a still-ruined city cannot be the one Daniel 9:25 identifies as initiating the rebuilding.*

Why Nehemiah 2 Is the Sole Qualifying Decree

In the month of Nisan, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (historically confirmed by Ptolemy's Canon, Egyptian astronomical tablets, and Babylonian business documents), Nehemiah requests and receives a comprehensive authorization to rebuild Jerusalem.^{16,17}

Neh 2:5, 7–8 *"I said to the king, 'If it pleases the king... send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it.'... And I said to the king, '...Let letters be given me for the governors beyond the River... and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which is by the temple, for the wall of the city.'"*

- Language match: decree explicitly addresses the CITY (ir), its WALL (chomah), and its GATES — exact vocabulary of Dan 9:25
- Plaza and moat: the rebuilt city included public squares (rechob — Neh 8:1, 3, 16) fulfilling Dan 9:25's "plaza and moat"
- Troublous times: rebuilding under constant armed opposition from Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem (Neh 4–6) — builders worked with one hand on the tool, one on a weapon (Neh 4:17)

- Historical confirmation: Artaxerxes I Longimanus reigned 465–424 BC; 20th year = 445 or 444 BC (see below)
- Mathematical fit: 444 BC + 173,880 prophetic days = Nisan 10, AD 33 — the Triumphal Entry (Hoehner)

D. The 20th Year of Artaxerxes: 445 BC or 444 BC? — The Calendar Systems Behind the Discrepancy

The one-year discrepancy between Anderson (445 BC) and Hoehner (444 BC) is not a simple arithmetic error by either scholar. It reflects a genuine and well-documented ambiguity in ancient Near Eastern chronology where three different calendar and regnal-year counting systems intersect, and ancient sources do not always specify which one they are using. Understanding these three systems resolves the discrepancy and shows why Hoehner's date is methodologically superior.^{16,17,42}

System 1: The Persian / Babylonian Accession-Year Method

The Persian imperial court used the Babylonian calendar and the Babylonian method of counting a king's regnal years, known as the accession-year system (also called post-dating).^{43,42}

- The year a king came to the throne was designated his accession year — a partial year not counted as Year 1
- Year 1 officially began at the first Nisan (the Babylonian and Persian new year, in the spring) after his accession
- Example: Artaxerxes I became king in mid-465 BC. His accession year = the remainder of 465 BC. His Year 1 = Nisan 464 BC. His Year 20 = Nisan 445 BC.
- This system is confirmed by multiple independent sources: Parker and Dubberstein's *Babylonian Chronology* (1956), Ptolemy's Canon, Egyptian astronomical tablets, and Babylonian cuneiform business documents from the period⁴³
- Under the Persian accession-year system: Artaxerxes' Year 20 = Nisan 445 BC = Anderson's starting date (March 14, 445 BC)

System 2: The Jewish Non-Accession-Year Method

The Jewish calendar used a different convention for counting the reigns of foreign kings, known as the non-accession-year system (also called ante-dating or inclusive reckoning). Edwin Thiele's foundational work on OT chronology documented this pattern across multiple OT texts.^{42,17}

- The partial year in which a king came to the throne was counted as Year 1, not as an accession year
- Year 2 then began at the first Nisan or Tishri after the king's accession, depending on the context
- This system appears consistently in Jewish writers when reckoning the reigns of foreign kings according to their own calendar conventions — Thiele documents it across the books of Kings and Chronicles⁴²
- Example applied to Artaxerxes: the partial year of 465 BC is counted as Year 1. Each subsequent year shifts one year later in the BC count. Year 20 therefore = Nisan 444 BC.
- Hoehner's argument: Nehemiah, writing as a Jew for a Jewish audience, would naturally count Artaxerxes' years by Jewish non-accession convention. When Neh 2:1 states "in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes," he is counting by Jewish convention — not Persian court convention. This gives Year 20 = 444 BC.¹⁷
- Under the Jewish non-accession-year system: Artaxerxes' Year 20 = Nisan 444 BC = Hoehner's starting date (March 5, 444 BC)

System 3: The Jewish Tishri vs. Nisan New Year Complication

A further variable is which new year point Jewish writers used when counting foreign kings' years. The Jewish calendar had two new year points operating simultaneously.⁴²

- Nisan 1 (spring, around March/April) — the religious new year, used for counting months and festivals (Exod 12:2)
- Tishri 1 (fall, around September/October) — the civil new year, used in some periods for counting kings' regnal years in the OT historical books
- When counting the regnal years of foreign kings, post-exilic Jewish writers appear to have used the Nisan new year (aligned with Persian-Babylonian convention) while applying non-accession counting —

Hoehner's conclusion, which produces the 444 BC date with Nisan 1 = approximately March 5 as confirmed by new moon calculations^{17,43}

- The potential ± 6 month shift from the Tishri/Nisan distinction is resolved by the astronomical data: the March 5, 444 BC date (Nisan 1) is confirmed by Parker and Dubberstein's calculation of the new moon visibility in Jerusalem for that year⁴³

The Three Systems Compared

System	Used By	Accession Year	Artaxerxes Year 20	Result
Persian / Babylonian accession-year	Persian imperial court; official documents; Parker-Dubberstein	Not counted as Year 1; Year 1 begins first Nisan after accession	Nisan 445 BC	Anderson's start date: March 14, 445 BC → AD 32 terminus (astronomically impossible for Friday Nisan 14)
Jewish non-accession-year	Jewish writers counting foreign kings; Nehemiah's convention (Thiele)	Counted as Year 1; shifts the count one year later	Nisan 444 BC	Hoehner's start date: March 5, 444 BC → AD 33 terminus (astronomically confirmed: Friday April 3 = Nisan 14) □
Jewish Tishri reckoning	Some OT texts for Israelite kings; potentially variable	Variable by context	Potentially Tishri 444 BC	Resolved by astronomical data: Nisan new year used by Nehemiah in post-exilic context, confirmed by Parker-Dubberstein new moon calculation

Why Hoehner's 444 BC Is Methodologically Superior

The two scholars are not simply in arithmetical disagreement — they are using internally consistent but different assumptions about which calendar system Nehemiah employed. The evidence tips decisively toward Hoehner on two independent grounds.^{17,42}

- 1. The text itself: Nehemiah is a Jewish author writing in Hebrew for a Jewish audience. It is more consistent to read his regnal-year numbering by Jewish non-accession convention than by Persian court convention, even though Artaxerxes was a Persian king. Thiele's documentation of Jewish non-accession reckoning for foreign kings supports this reading.⁴²
- 2. Astronomical confirmation: Anderson's 445 BC date produces an AD 32 terminus. In AD 32, Nisan 14 fell on a Sunday or Monday — not a Friday. The crucifixion cannot have occurred on a non-Friday (all four Gospels require "the day of Preparation" before the Sabbath). Hoehner's 444 BC date produces AD 33, in which Nisan 14 = Friday, April 3 — the only astronomically viable date in the range.^{17,41}
- 3. The new moon confirmation: Parker and Dubberstein's astronomical tables confirm that Nisan 1 in 444 BC = approximately March 5 (Julian), when the new moon would have become visible from Jerusalem. This corroborates Hoehner's specific date independently of his regnal-year argument.⁴³

i *The honest caveat: neither Anderson nor Hoehner is simply wrong. They are using internally consistent but different methodological assumptions about which calendar system Nehemiah employed. The one-year ambiguity is a genuine feature of ancient chronology, not a mistake by either man. The astronomical evidence resolves the ambiguity in Hoehner's favor. The discrepancy is a sign that Hoehner did more rigorous work, not a sign that the calculation itself is fragile.*

E. The Prophetic Year — 360 Days

The calculation depends on the correct year-length. Scripture itself establishes the prophetic year as 360 days (twelve 30-day months). This is not imposed on the text but derived from parallel chronological statements across multiple books.^{18,17}

- Gen 7:11, 24 and 8:4: The Flood's first 150 days = 5 months (months 2–7); therefore 30 days/month
- Dan 7:25; 12:7: "a time, times, and half a time" = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years
- Rev 11:2: 42 months = the same $3\frac{1}{2}$ years
- Rev 11:3; 12:6: 1,260 days = the same $3\frac{1}{2}$ years

- Therefore: $1,260 \text{ days} \div 42 \text{ months} = 30 \text{ days/month}$; $12 \text{ months} \times 30 \text{ days} = 360 \text{ days/year}$ — the “ancient year” consistent with Mesopotamian and Egyptian calendars

F. The Day-Exact Calculation: 69 Weeks to the Triumphal Entry

The Arithmetic

- $69 \text{ weeks} \times 7 \text{ years/week} = 483 \text{ prophetic years}$
- $483 \times 360 \text{ days} = 173,880 \text{ total prophetic days}$
- $173,880 \div 365.2422 = 476.068 \text{ solar years} = 476 \text{ years and approximately 25 days}$

Anderson vs. Hoehner: The Two Major Calculations

Two landmark scholarly works have calculated the 69 weeks with astronomical precision. Both use 173,880 days; they differ in start date and crucifixion year.^{16,17}

Element	Anderson (The Coming Prince, 1894)	Hoehner (Chronological Aspects, 1977)
Decree date	Nisan 1, 445 BC = March 14, 445 BC (Julian)	Nisan 1, 444 BC = March 5, 444 BC (Julian)
Year of Artaxerxes	20th year by accession-year reckoning	20th year by non-accession reckoning (one year later)
Year length	360-day prophetic year ($12 \times 30 \text{ days}$)	360-day prophetic year (same)
Total days	$69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880 \text{ days}$	$69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880 \text{ days}$
Solar conversion	476 solar years + 24 days	476 solar years + 25 days
End date	April 6, AD 32 (Julian) = 10 Nisan	March 30, AD 33 (Julian) = 10 Nisan
Terminus event	Triumphal Entry — Christ presents as Messiah	Triumphal Entry — Christ presents as Messiah
Crucifixion year	AD 32 — PROBLEMATIC: no Friday Nisan 14 in AD 32 is astronomically possible	AD 33 — Friday April 3 (Julian) = Nisan 14 ✓ Astronomically confirmed
Concurring scholars	Pentecost, Walvoord, Alva McClain	Hoehner; preferred by modern astronomical verification
Key weakness	AD 32 crucifixion requires a Sunday/Monday Passover — impossible	Minor debate over exact Nisan 1 date; starting year disputed by some

The Preferred Calculation: Hoehner (444 BC → AD 33)

Hoehner's calculation is preferred on two decisive grounds:¹⁷

- Astronomical impossibility of AD 32: The crucifixion must occur on a Friday (the day of Preparation, all four Gospels). In AD 32, Nisan 14 fell on Sunday or Monday. In AD 33, Nisan 14 = Friday, April 3 (Julian) — the only astronomically viable year within the required range
- Triumphal Entry in AD 33: Nisan 10 (the day the Passover lamb was selected, Exod 12:3) in AD 33 = March 30 (Julian). This is the precise day Christ entered Jerusalem and publicly presented Himself as the Messianic King

Step-by-Step Calculation (Hoehner)

- Start: Nisan 1, 444 BC = March 5, 444 BC (Julian)
 - Add 173,880 days: $173,880 \div 365.25 = 476 \text{ years} + 25 \text{ days}$ (accounting for leap years)
 - $444 \text{ BC} + 476 \text{ years} = \text{AD } 33$ (no year zero: $444 + 476 - 1 = \text{AD } 33$)
 - $\text{March } 5 + 25 \text{ days} = \text{March } 30, \text{AD } 33 = \text{Nisan } 10, \text{AD } 33$
- End: March 30, AD 33 (Julian) = 10 Nisan = The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
- Crucifixion: Friday, April 3, AD 33 = Nisan 14 — the day the Passover lamb was slain

► Anderson's conclusion (*The Coming Prince*, 1894): "THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 173,880 DAYS, OR SEVEN TIMES SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC YEARS OF 360 DAYS, the first sixty-

nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy." Hoehner's refinement shifts the year from AD 32 to AD 33 with greater astronomical precision but confirms Anderson's fundamental insight.

G. A Triple Convergence: Calendar, Prophecy, and Astronomy on April 3, AD 33

The precision of Daniel's 69-week prophecy is confirmed not merely by one line of evidence but by three entirely independent witnesses — the Jewish calendar, the mathematical calculation of Daniel 9:25, and astronomical observation — all converging on the same date: Friday, April 3, AD 33.^{17,41}

1. The Calendrical Witness

All four Gospels require the crucifixion to have occurred on the day of Preparation before the Sabbath (Matt 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31), which in Passover week means Nisan 14 — the day the Passover lamb was slain (Exod 12:6; 1 Cor 5:7). In AD 33, Nisan 14 fell on Friday, April 3. The alignment of Passover with a Friday is not common; in the astronomically viable range for the crucifixion (approximately AD 26–36), it occurs in only a small number of years, of which AD 33 is the sole date that also satisfies the Daniel 9 calculation and provides complementary astronomical support.^{17,41}

2. The Prophetic Witness

As demonstrated in the Hoehner calculation above, 173,880 prophetic days from Nisan 1, 444 BC terminates on March 30, AD 33 — the Triumphal Entry, the day Messiah publicly presented Himself as King (Nisan 10). Four days later, April 3 (Nisan 14), was the day the Passover lamb was slaughtered. The prophecy does not merely predict the year; it identifies the precise week in which the Messiah would be “cut off” (Dan 9:26). The calendar and Daniel's arithmetic are not independent confirmations of each other — they are the same calculation expressed two ways.^{17,16}

3. The Astronomical Witness — The Midday Darkness

The midday darkness on April 3, AD 33 is a distinct supernatural event, confirmed by three Gospel writers and entirely independent of any astronomical explanation. A solar eclipse is astronomically impossible on Passover, which always falls on a full moon — the opposite phase required for a solar eclipse. Three hours of darkness during full daylight (approximately noon to 3 PM; Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44–45) has no natural astronomical explanation. Luke's language is precise: “the sun being obscured” (23:45, NASB) — a word that distinguishes it from eclipse language. The most natural reading: the creation responding to the death of its Creator.⁴¹

An additional note: as the day's events closed, a partial lunar eclipse — approximately 59% of the lunar disk in Earth's shadow — was visible from Jerusalem beginning at sundown, as the Passover Sabbath commenced. That the same evening on which the Passover lamb had been slain, the full Passover moon entered the shadow of the earth at the moment it rose over Jerusalem, is a detail that does not lend itself to easy dismissal as coincidence. This event is not referenced in Scripture and is not the fulfillment of Joel 2:31 — that prophecy belongs to the Day of the LORD in the Tribulation. It is an independently confirmed astronomical fact. See endnote for full scholarly detail.⁴¹

4. The Convergence Summary

Witness	Evidence	Date Confirmed
Calendrical	Nisan 14 = Friday in AD 33; required by all four Gospels for the day of the crucifixion (Matt 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31)	Friday, April 3, AD 33
Prophetic	173,880 days from Nisan 1, 444 BC; Hoehner's calculation terminates at the Triumphal Entry (Nisan 10, March 30); the crucifixion follows four days later at Nisan 14, April 3	Week of March 30–April 3, AD 33
Additional note	A partial lunar eclipse (~59% magnitude) was visible from Jerusalem at sundown, April 3, AD 33, as the Passover Sabbath began. Confirmed by independent astronomical reconstruction. Not referenced in Scripture. Not a fulfillment of Joel 2:31 (Tribulation — Day of the LORD). See endnote.	Evening of April 3, AD 33

No other proposed date for the crucifixion satisfies both the calendrical and prophetic witnesses simultaneously. The convergence is not the result of selective data — it emerges from independent lines of evidence arriving at the same point. The precision of Daniel's 69-week prophecy is confirmed both mathematically and historically.^{17,16}

H. Christ's Own Acknowledgment: Luke 19:41–44

The most remarkable confirmation of this exact-day fulfillment is Christ's rebuke of Jerusalem on the very day of the Triumphal Entry:²⁵

Luke 19:41–42, 44 *"When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes... because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.'"*

- "The time of your visitation" (kairos tēs episkopēs) refers directly to Daniel's prophecy
- Israel's leadership, had they calculated Dan 9:25 correctly from Nehemiah 2 using prophetic years, would have known to the day that Messiah was due
- Their failure was not innocent ignorance but culpable blindness — hence Christ's tears

I. The Three Periods of Daniel 9:25–27

Period	Weeks	Years	Key Events & Fulfillment
Weeks 1–7 First division	7 weeks	49 years 444–395 BC	Jerusalem rebuilt with walls, gates, and plaza under Nehemiah against constant opposition. Covers the period of Nehemiah 3–6. May also terminate at the close of the OT prophetic canon (Malachi, c. 400 BC).
Weeks 8–69 Second division	62 weeks	434 years 395 BC – AD 33	The intertestamental "silent centuries": Persian, Greek (Alexander, Ptolemies, Seleucids), Maccabean, and Roman periods. Terminated when "Messiah the Prince" presented Himself publicly on the Triumphal Entry — Nisan 10, AD 33.
After Week 69 THE GAP	Interlude	Church Age AD 33 – Rapture	Messiah "cut off" (crucifixion, AD 33). Jerusalem and temple destroyed by Rome (AD 70). The Church Age — a mystery hidden from OT prophets (Eph 3:1–9) — intervenes. Israel's prophetic clock is paused.
Week 70 Final week	1 week	7 years (Future)	Antichrist confirms covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27). Midpoint: Abomination of Desolation. Second half: Great Tribulation. Terminates: Second Coming, national conversion of Israel, all six purposes of v.24 fulfilled.

Daniel 9:26 — After the 69th Week: Two Intervening Events

Dan 9:26 (NASB 2020) *"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."*

- "After the sixty-two weeks": Events of v.26 occur AFTER Week 69 ends, not within the 70th Week — this grammar establishes the gap
- "Mashiach will be cut off": karath — a covenant term for violent death (Isa 53:8). The crucifixion. "Have nothing" = He receives no kingdom at First Advent; rejection, not coronation
- "People of the prince to come": Romans under Titus destroy Jerusalem in AD 70. The future prince (Antichrist) will have Roman connections — his people are identified by the AD 70 destruction
- "To the end... desolations are determined": An indefinite interlude — the Church Age — described as a period of ongoing war and desolation before the 70th Week begins

Daniel 9:27 — The 70th Week: Entirely Future

Dan 9:27 (NASB 2020) *"And he will confirm a covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, until a decreed destruction is poured out on the one who makes desolate."*

- "He": The nearest antecedent is the Gentile prince of v.26 — the Antichrist. Not the Messiah (the alternative amillennial reading requires a grammatically remote subject)
- "Confirm a covenant with the many": The Antichrist brokers a 7-year political-religious agreement with Israel — beginning the Tribulation period
- "Middle of the week": 3½ years in (1,260 days); the Antichrist breaks the covenant at this point
- "Put a stop to sacrifice": Requires a rebuilt temple with functioning sacrificial worship — not yet existing since AD 70; demands a future temple
- "Abomination that makes desolate": The Antichrist's desecration of the temple and self-proclamation as God (Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:14–15)
- "Decreed destruction poured out on the one who makes desolate": The Antichrist is destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 19:20; 2 Thess 2:8)

J. The Gap Between Week 69 and Week 70 — The Church Age

The prophetic clock for Israel stopped when Messiah was rejected and "cut off" at the close of Week 69. The Church Age — the present dispensation of grace — is an intercalation not revealed in the Old Testament. The clock resumes when the Rapture removes the Church and the Antichrist confirms his covenant with Israel.^{18,5}

- Biblical precedent for gaps: Isa 61:1–2 — Jesus deliberately stopped reading mid-verse in Luke 4:18–19, omitting "the day of vengeance"; the First and Second Advents are separated by the entire Church Age yet adjacent in the text
- Eph 3:4–6 — The mystery of the Church was "not made known to the sons of men in other generations"; OT prophets could not see the Church Age between the Advents
- The gap is demanded by v.26 itself: the crucifixion (AD 33) and the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) both fall between Week 69 and Week 70; neither is part of the 70th Week

i Ryrie Study Bible note on Dan 9:27: *"The prince who is to come (v.26) will make a seven-year covenant with Israel. At the mid-point he will break it... This period is the 'time of Jacob's trouble' (Jer 30:7) and the great tribulation of Matt 24:21... It has not yet occurred."*

K. Summary: The Fulfillment Chart of Daniel's 70 Weeks

Event	Period	Date	Status
Decree to rebuild Jerusalem	Before Week 1	Nisan 1, 444 BC (Mar 5, Julian)	✓ FULFILLED — Neh 2:1–8; Artaxerxes to Nehemiah
Jerusalem rebuilt — walls, gates, plaza	Weeks 1–7 (49 yrs)	444–395 BC	✓ FULFILLED — Neh 3–6; walls completed in 52 days (Neh 6:15)
Intertestamental silent centuries	Weeks 8–69 (434 yrs)	395 BC – AD 33	✓ ELAPSED — Persian, Greek, Maccabean, Roman periods
Triumphal Entry — Messiah presents Himself	End of Week 69	Nisan 10, AD 33 Mar 30 (Julian)	✓ FULFILLED — 173,880 days from Nisan 1, 444 BC (Hoehner)
Crucifixion — Messiah "cut off"	After Week 69	Nisan 14, AD 33 Apr 3 (Julian)	✓ FULFILLED — Dan 9:26a; Isa 53:8; four days after Entry
Jerusalem and temple destroyed	After Week 69 (gap)	AD 70	✓ FULFILLED — Dan 9:26b; Roman armies under Titus
The Church Age — prophetic parenthesis	THE GAP	AD 33 → Rapture	□ PRESENT — Mystery age (Eph 3:1–9); clock paused for Israel
Antichrist confirms 7-year covenant with Israel	Start of Week 70	Future (post-Rapture)	⇒ FUTURE — Dan 9:27a; the Tribulation begins
Abomination of Desolation —	Midpoint of Week	Future (3½ yrs in)	⇒ FUTURE — Dan 9:27b; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4

temple desecrated	70		
Second Coming; Antichrist destroyed; six purposes fulfilled	End of Week 70	Future	⇒ FUTURE — Dan 9:27c; Rev 19:11–20; Rom 11:26

III. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

One of the most critical and contested distinctions in all of biblical theology is the difference between Israel and the Church. The dispensational position — held consistently by Pentecost, Walvoord, Ryrie, and the DTS tradition — insists that these are two eternally distinct entities in God's program, each with its own calling, covenant basis, promises, and destiny. Conflating them — whether by making the Church the new Israel (replacement theology) or by projecting the Church into the Old Testament prophetic program — collapses the literal hermeneutic and makes hundreds of specific OT promises impossible to fulfill.^{5,1,28}

A. The Two-Advent Problem — What Israel Expected and What Was Delivered

Before examining the theological distinction between Israel and the Church, we must first understand why Israel as a nation failed to recognize her own Messiah at His First Advent. This is not merely a historical curiosity — it is the interpretive key to the entire Israel-Church relationship and to the correct reading of OT prophecy. The answer lies in the two-mountain problem: the OT prophets saw both Advents, but the valley of the Church Age between them was hidden from their view.^{77,76,79}

1. The Two-Mountain Problem: Why Israel Missed the First Advent

The OT prophets wrote about both Advents, often in the same passage, without always indicating a gap between them. Peter explains this directly:^{77,79}

1 Pet 1:10–12 *“As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.”*

The prophets themselves did not always know when the two aspects of their prophecy — the suffering and the glory — would occur. This explains why the disciples, even after three years with Jesus, still expected an immediate earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6).

The illustration used by early dispensationalists is the “two-mountain” phenomenon: a viewer standing in a valley sees two mountain peaks that appear adjacent, not knowing that a vast valley (the Church Age) lies between them. The first peak is the First Advent; the second is the Second Advent. From the OT vantage point, they looked like one event.⁷⁷

2. Messianic Expectations at the First Advent

First-century Judaism held a complex set of Messianic expectations derived from genuine OT prophecy but shaped by centuries of oppression under foreign powers. Some of these expectations were correct; others were based on an incomplete reading that overlooked the Suffering Servant passages.^{77,78}

Fruchtenbaum (Israelology, pp. 659–664) identifies the specific rabbinic mechanism behind this incomplete reading. Faced with the apparent contradiction between Isaiah 53 (a suffering, dying Messiah) and Isaiah 11 (a reigning, conquering Messiah), the dominant rabbinic tradition developed the doctrine of two Messiahs: Messiah ben Joseph, who would suffer and die, and Messiah ben David, who would reign and conquer. This two-Messiah solution allowed Israel to hold both categories of prophecy without accepting two advents of the same Messiah. The New Testament's claim — one Messiah, two advents — was therefore not merely unexpected; it was theologically inadmissible within the prevailing rabbinic framework. Understanding this explains why even devout, Scripture-saturated leaders missed the First Advent. They were not reading carelessly. They were reading through a hermeneutical grid that had systematically separated what God had held together.⁴⁵

- Correct expectation: Messiah would be a descendant of David (2 Sam 7:12–16; Jer 23:5–6) — Jesus confirmed (Matt 22:42–45)
- Correct expectation: born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2) — fulfilled (Matt 2:1–6; Luke 2:4–7)
- Correct expectation: announced by a forerunner (Isa 40:3–5; Mal 3:1) — fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matt 3:1–3; Luke 1:17)
- Correct expectation: would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9) — fulfilled at the Triumphal Entry (Matt 21:1–9)

- Incorrect expectation: would immediately overthrow Rome and establish an earthly Kingdom — based on ignoring Isa 53 and the Suffering Servant passages
- Incorrect expectation: would be primarily a political-military deliverer — missed the atoning, priestly function of His First Advent (Heb 2:17; 9:11–14)

► *Jesus' rebuke of the disciples on the Emmaus road is decisive (Luke 24:25–27): "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" The suffering had to precede the glory. Israel's error was in reading only the glory passages.*

3. The Critical Text: Luke 4:16–21 — Jesus Stops Mid-Sentence

The most vivid illustration of the two-Advent structure is found in Luke 4, when Jesus reads from Isaiah 61 in the Nazareth synagogue.^{79,78}

Isa 61:1–2a (the portion Jesus read) *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the humble; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD..."*

Isa 61:2b (the portion Jesus deliberately stopped before) *"...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn."*

Jesus closed the scroll after "the favorable year of the LORD" and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). The second half of verse 2 — "the day of vengeance of our God" — is the Second Advent. Two thousand years separate a comma in Isaiah 61:2. This is the prophetic gap in microcosm.⁷⁹

4. Comparison Table: First Advent Expectations vs. Second Advent Fulfillments

Feature	First Advent — What Israel Expected / Received	Second Advent — What Will Be Fulfilled
Messiah's Identity	Expected: a conquering King like David. Received: a Suffering Servant (Isa 53); the Lamb of God. The manner of His coming was a mystery to most (1 Pet 1:10–12)	King of Kings and Lord of Lords, visibly, gloriously, irresistibly (Rev 19:11–16; Zech 14:3–4)
Kingdom Establishment	Expected: immediate establishment of the Davidic Kingdom, overthrowing Rome. Received: spiritual kingdom inaugurated; literal Davidic Kingdom deferred (Luke 17:20–21; John 18:36)	Davidic Kingdom literally established in Jerusalem; Christ reigns on David's throne for 1,000 years (Isa 9:6–7; Luke 1:32–33; Rev 20:4–6)
National Israel	Expected: political liberation and restoration as head of the nations. Received: rejection of Messiah by the nation's leadership; destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) (Matt 23:37–39)	National conversion, restoration, and exaltation as head of the nations; every tribe mourns and repents (Zech 12:10–13:1; Rom 11:26)
The Temple	Expected: a glorified temple in a renewed Jerusalem. Received: Jesus cleansed the existing temple (John 2:13–22); predicted its destruction (Matt 24:2)	The Millennial Temple built (Ezek 40–48); the glory of God returns (Ezek 43:1–5); all nations stream to worship (Isa 2:2–3; Zech 14:16)
Land	Expected: full possession of the covenant land. Received: Israel lived under Roman occupation; land promise not addressed at First Advent	Full literal possession of every acre of the Abrahamic grant (Gen 15:18–21); tribes settled in the Millennial re-allotment (Ezek 47–48)
Covenant Fulfillment	Expected: New Covenant fully activated for Israel. Received: New Covenant inaugurated at the Last Supper (Luke 22:20); its full national application to Israel deferred	New Covenant nationally applied to Israel: forgiveness of sin, indwelling Spirit, universal knowledge of God (Jer 31:33–34; Ezek 36:26–27)
Enemies	Expected: Gentile nations conquered; Roman empire overthrown. Received: Crucified by Rome; Israel scattered by Rome (AD 70)	All Gentile resistance destroyed at Armageddon; nations subject to the Messianic King; Satan bound (Rev 19:17–20:3)
The Branch / Shoot	Expected: the "Branch" (Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8) to appear and reign immediately. Received: Jesus fulfills the Branch prophecy in	The Branch reigns in full: judges the poor with righteousness, smites the earth with the rod of His mouth, establishes global peace (Isa

	identity but not yet in full regnal function (Isa 11:1– partially)	11:3–10)
Isaiah 61:1–2	Jesus reads Isa 61:1–2a and stops mid-sentence (Luke 4:18–19): "to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD" — First Advent ministry fulfilled	"And the day of vengeance of our God" (Isa 61:2b) — the Second Advent judgment, deliberately omitted by Jesus in Luke 4; reserved for the Second Coming
The Suffering Servant	Fulfilled: Isa 53 — despised, rejected, pierced for our transgressions, cut off from the land of the living, buried with the rich	Glorified: the once-rejected Servant is now the enthroned King; every knee bows (Phil 2:9–11; Isa 45:23; Rev 5:12–13)

5. Key OT Prophecies Requiring Two Advents to Fulfill

Isaiah 52:13–53:12 — The Suffering Servant (First Advent)

Isaiah 53 is the most comprehensive OT Messianic prophecy about the First Advent. Every detail found literal fulfillment in the life, death, and burial of Jesus Christ.^{72,69}

- Isa 53:2 — "No stately form or majesty": Jesus had no royal appearance; not immediately recognized as Messianic King
- Isa 53:3 — "Despised and rejected": the religious establishment rejected Jesus (John 1:11; Matt 27:22–23)
- Isa 53:5 — "Pierced for our transgressions": the crucifixion (John 19:34, 37; Rev 1:7)
- Isa 53:7 — "As a sheep is silent before its shearers": Jesus' silence before Pilate and Herod (Matt 27:12–14; Luke 23:9)
- Isa 53:9 — "His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet with a rich man in His death": crucified between criminals; buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb (Matt 27:38, 57–60)
- Isa 53:10–11 — "If He would render Himself as a guilt offering" — the atoning sacrifice; "He will see His offspring" — the resurrection and its fruit

Zechariah 9:9 and 9:10 — Two Advents in Adjacent Verses

Zech 9:9–10 *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey... [v.10] And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."*

Verse 9 was fulfilled at the Triumphal Entry (Matt 21:5). Verse 10 has never been fulfilled — it awaits the Second Advent. A single prophetic oracle spans two comings separated by centuries.^{70,82}

Zechariah 12:10 — Israel's National Repentance at the Second Advent

Zech 12:10 *"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."*

This passage identifies the mourning of Israel when they recognize Jesus as the One they rejected — the national conversion at the Second Coming (Rom 11:26). The phrase "whom they have pierced" is cited in John 19:37 as fulfilled at the crucifixion and in Rev 1:7 as future at the Second Coming — the same verse serves both Advents.^{70,73}

B. Israel: National, Earthly, Ethnic, and Covenantal

Israel in Scripture is always a specific ethnic and national people — the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The name first occurs in Gen 32:28 when God renamed Jacob. Every subsequent use in the OT refers to this ethnic people or their national community. No OT passage uses "Israel" to refer to Gentiles or to a spiritual community of believers broadly defined.^{28,9,1}

- An ethnic people chosen and called: "I have chosen you and have not rejected you" (Isa 41:9); "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2)

- Recipients of four unconditional covenants: Abrahamic (Gen 12; 15; 17), Palestinian (Deut 30), Davidic (2 Sam 7), and New (Jer 31:31–34) — all made with ethnic Israel, not the Church
- An earthly, geographical program: the covenant land (Gen 15:18–21), the city of Jerusalem (Zech 8:3; 12:6–7), the literal throne of David (2 Sam 7:12–16; Luke 1:32–33), and the Millennial Temple (Ezek 40–48) are all physical and geographic
- A future of literal national restoration: “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel” (Amos 9:14); “All Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26); “the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29)
- The “old olive tree” of Romans 11: branches (individual Israelites) broken off in unbelief, to be grafted back in nationally when “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (v.25)

i Ryrie (*Dispensationalism*, pp. 39–40): “The Church is not fulfilling promises made to Israel... The unconditional Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants guarantee a future for Israel as a nation.” To identify the Church as Israel is to make these covenants either already fulfilled (yet they clearly are not) or permanently cancelled (which contradicts God’s sworn oath). Neither option is exegetically tenable.

C. The Church: Heavenly, Mystical, a New Creation, and a Mystery

The Church is neither a continuation of Israel nor a replacement for Israel. It is an entirely new entity — a mystery (mystērion) hidden from OT prophets and first disclosed through the apostle Paul (Eph 3:1–9). The Church came into existence at Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit first formed believers into the Body of Christ by Spirit-baptism. Its origin, constitution, destiny, and promises are fundamentally distinct from Israel's.^{5,1,28}

- The Body of Christ, formed by Spirit baptism: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks” (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:22–23) — this baptism is unique to the present age
- A mystery (mystērion = a previously unrevealed secret now disclosed): “the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints” (Col 1:26; cf. Eph 3:1–9; Rom 16:25–26)
- The Church was entirely hidden from OT prophets: Peter states that even the prophets themselves could not determine the timing of the grace they predicted (1 Pet 1:10–12), confirming that the Church Age was not visible to them
- Transcends ethnic distinctions: “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28) — in the Church, ethnic identity is not abolished but is irrelevant for standing before God
- A heavenly calling and destiny: “seated... in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6); “our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil 3:20) — the Church’s inheritance is heavenly, not the covenant land
- Not under the Mosaic Law, the Palestinian Land Covenant, or the Davidic throne promises: these were given specifically to Israel as a nation and were never extended to the Church
- Destined for the Rapture (1 Thess 4:13–18), the Bema Seat Judgment (2 Cor 5:10), the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7–9), and a co-regency role in the Millennium (Rev 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12)

D. Why Replacement Theology Is Exegetically Untenable

Replacement theology (also called supersessionism) holds that the Church has replaced or superseded Israel in God’s program, inheriting Israel’s promises either spiritually or literally. The dispensational tradition holds this to be exegetically indefensible on three grounds.^{5,1}

- 1. The unconditional covenants do not fail. God made the Abrahamic Covenant by unilateral oath (Gen 15:12–17; Heb 6:13–18). The Palestinian Covenant is guaranteed by the same oath (Deut 30:3–5). The Davidic Covenant is sworn by God’s holiness (Ps 89:35). No human failure — individual or national — can nullify a unilateral divine oath. “God is not a man, that He should lie” (Num 23:19).
- 2. Romans 9–11 makes the continued future of ethnic Israel explicit. Paul devotes three chapters to this question precisely because the Church’s existence raised it. His answer: “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew” (Rom 11:2). “All Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26). “the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29). These statements are meaningless if “Israel” simply means “believers” in these chapters.
- 3. Consistent hermeneutics require literal fulfillment. OT prophecies about the First Advent were fulfilled literally (Mic 5:2, Bethlehem; Zech 9:9, the donkey; Zech 11:12–13, thirty pieces of silver). The same passages that predict the First Advent also predict the Second Advent and the Kingdom. If literal fulfillment

was required for the First Advent, consistency demands literal fulfillment for the Second Advent and Kingdom. The land, city, throne, and temple cannot become spiritual metaphors for the Church without abandoning the very hermeneutic that identifies Jesus as Messiah.

► Walvoord (*Israel in Prophecy*, p. 26): “The literal interpretation of Scripture is the only method consistent with itself and consistent with the fulfillment of prophecy that has already been fulfilled. The tendency to spiritualize unfulfilled prophecy while accepting the literal fulfillment of fulfilled prophecy is an inconsistency that destroys the foundation of prophetic interpretation.”

E. Key Proof Texts for the Distinction

Scripture provides multiple explicit texts that treat Israel and the Church as distinct categories simultaneously, making the distinction not a theological inference but a textual fact.^{9,1}

- 1 Cor 10:32 — “Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God.” Paul lists three categories simultaneously. If the Church were Israel, this sentence would be redundant nonsense. The three are distinct in the same verse.⁹
- Rom 11:25–29 — Israel’s hardening is partial (not total — Jewish believers exist throughout the Church Age) and temporary (“until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in”). After that point, Israel is saved nationally (v.26). The “gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (v.29) — directed to Israel as a covenant people, not to the Church.⁹
- Eph 3:4–6 — The mystery: Gentiles are “fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” This was “not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed.” If the Church were in the OT, this statement would be false. The Church’s hiddenness from OT prophets proves it was not the subject of their prophecies about “Israel.”
- Acts 15:14–17 — James quotes Amos 9:11–12 at the Jerusalem Council. His application is decisive: God is currently visiting the Gentiles “to take from them a people for His name” (the Church). AFTER this, He will “return and rebuild the fallen tabernacle of David” (Israel’s national restoration). Two sequential, distinct programs: Church first, then Israel restored. If the Church were Israel, the “return and rebuild” would be redundant.
- Matt 23:37–39 — Jesus addresses Jerusalem directly: “You shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD.’” He predicts Israel’s rejection of Him, their desolation, and their future national welcoming of Him at the Second Coming. This is not addressed to the Church but to ethnic Israel as a nation with a specific national future.
- Luke 1:32–33 — The angel Gabriel promises Mary that her son will be given “the throne of His father David” and will “reign over the house of Jacob forever.” The house of Jacob = Israel. The throne of David = the literal Davidic throne in Jerusalem. These promises were not yet fulfilled during Jesus’ First Advent. They await the Second Coming and the Millennium.

F. A Comparison: How Israel and the Church Differ in Six Categories

Category	Israel	The Church
Origin	Called into existence through Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; c. 2091 BC)	Called into existence at Pentecost (Acts 2; c. AD 33) by Spirit baptism (1 Cor 12:13)
Constitution	An ethnic, national, covenantal people — born into by physical descent from Abraham	A spiritual body — entered through faith in Christ and Spirit baptism, transcending ethnicity
Covenants	Recipients of the four unconditional covenants (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, New)	Participates in the New Covenant through Christ as Mediator; does not inherit OT land or throne promises
Program	Earthly: covenant land, Jerusalem, the temple, the Davidic throne, national restoration	Heavenly: the Body of Christ, citizenship in heaven, Rapture, Bema Seat, Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Prophetic status	Prominent throughout the OT; the subject of Isa, Jer, Ezek, Dan, Zech, and dozens of other prophecies	A mystery hidden from OT prophets (Eph 3:1–9; Col 1:26–27); not the subject of OT prophecy
Future	National conversion (Zech 12:10; Rom 11:26),	Rapture (1 Thess 4:13–18), co-reigning with

	restoration to the land, Millennial exaltation as head of the nations (Deut 28:13; Isa 60)	Christ in the Millennium (Rev 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12), eternal dwelling in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21)
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G. The Times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24)

Jesus' reference to "the times of the Gentiles" frames the entire period from Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem (605 BC) to the Second Coming. During this entire era, Israel is under Gentile political dominance. Daniel's four-empire sequence (Dan 2; 7) describes this period.^{1,3}

- Babylon → Medo-Persia → Greece → Rome (four empires of Dan 2 and 7) — each represented by a different metal in the statue of Dan 2 and by different beasts in Dan 7
- Rome was not fully destroyed but "dissolved" into Europe; it will be revived in the form of a 10-nation confederacy under the Antichrist (Dan 7:7, 20, 24; Rev 17:12–13)
- The Church Age falls entirely within the "times of the Gentiles" — it is the interlude between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel, during which Israel's prophetic clock is paused
- The "times of the Gentiles" end at the Second Coming when the stone "cut without hands" destroys the statue and fills the earth (Dan 2:34–35, 44–45) — the literal establishment of the Millennial Kingdom

Fruchtenbaum's definition (Footsteps of the Messiah, p. 21) is more precise than the standard paraphrase: "The Times of the Gentiles can best be defined as that long period of time from the Babylonian Empire to the Second Coming of the Messiah during which time the Gentiles have dominance over the City of Jerusalem." It is not merely Gentile world power but specifically Gentile dominance over Jerusalem that marks the period. The 1967 return of Jerusalem to Israeli governance is prophetically significant — though Fruchtenbaum notes carefully that it does not end the Times of the Gentiles, since Jerusalem remains internationally contested and Jewish sovereignty there is not yet of the character Daniel describes at the Second Coming (Zech 12:2–3; 14:2).⁴⁴

i *The Church Age is not the Kingdom. The "times of the Gentiles" are still running. Jerusalem is contested and under international pressure (Luke 21:24: "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"). The modern State of Israel is a precursor movement, not the Millennial restoration — it exists within, not after, the times of the Gentiles.*

The Modern State of Israel in Prophetic Sequence

Fruchtenbaum identifies five distinct positions on where the modern State of Israel fits in Bible prophecy: (1) it has no prophetic significance (replacement theology); (2) it is a miracle of God but not prophetically specific; (3) it is a fulfillment of prophecy but in unbelief, which disqualifies it from significance; (4) it represents the prophetically anticipated regathering in unbelief, preparatory to the Tribulation; (5) it is the beginning of the final fulfillment. Fruchtenbaum argues for the fourth position, drawn from Ezekiel 36:22–24: God brings Israel back to the land not because they deserve it but for His name's sake — in unbelief, before the spiritual restoration that the Tribulation and Second Coming accomplish. Walvoord and Ryrie hold essentially the same position. Some dispensationalists are more cautious about applying prophetic categories to current events; the fourth view is the majority position within the DTS-aligned tradition.^{46,28,65}

- Ezek 36:22–24: "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name... I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land." The regathering is grounded in God's character, not Israel's faithfulness. This is why an unbelieving, secular Jewish state can still be the instrument of a prophetically anticipated regathering.⁴⁶
- The pattern in Ezekiel 36–37: regathering in unbelief (physical bones coming together) precedes the spiritual restoration (breath / Spirit entering). The modern State represents the first stage; the national conversion of Zech 12:10 and Rom 11:26 represents the second, still future stage.
- The Times of the Gentiles end only at the Second Coming when Christ establishes His throne in Jerusalem. Until then, the modern State exists as a necessary precursor — historically remarkable, prophetically anticipated, but not yet the Millennial restoration.

IV. THE PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The Rapture is the imminent, signless, sudden removal of all Church-age believers — both dead and living — from the earth, prior to Daniel's 70th Week. It is to be distinguished from the Second Coming in nature, timing, purpose, audience, and result.^{30,31,32}

A. Definition and Nature

The English word “rapture” comes from the Latin *rapturo*, a translation of the Greek *harpazo* — “caught up, snatched away” (1 Thess 4:17). The event involves two groups: (1) deceased Church-age believers, who are resurrected in glorified bodies, and (2) living Church-age believers, who are instantly transformed without dying.^{31,32}

B. Primary Scriptures

- 1 Thess 4:13–18 — The classic Rapture passage: the Lord descends; the dead in Christ rise; living believers are transformed and caught up (*harpazo*) to meet the Lord in the air²⁰
- 1 Cor 15:51–58 — The mystery of instantaneous transformation: “in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet”
- John 14:1–3 — “I will come again and receive you to Myself” — Christ comes for His own
- Titus 2:13 — “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior” — the imminent expectation
- Rev 3:10 — Promise to Philadelphia: “I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world” — *ek* (out of), not *dia* (through), the hour of testing³¹
- Phil 3:20 — “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”

C. Seven Arguments for Pretribulationism

The pretribulational position rests on convergent lines of biblical evidence, not a single proof-text.^{30,31}

- 1. Imminency — The Rapture may occur at any moment; no prophecy must be fulfilled first. The consistent NT exhortation to watch and be ready (Matt 24:42–44; Titus 2:13; James 5:7–8) presupposes this. Imminency is destroyed if the Church must pass through any portion of the Tribulation.³¹
- 2. Exemption from Wrath — The Tribulation is God's wrath upon a Christ-rejecting world (Rev 6:16–17; 11:18; 14:10). The Church is explicitly “not destined for wrath” (1 Thess 5:9; Rom 5:9). Midtrib and posttrib positions cannot escape this exemption applying to the entire Tribulation.
- 3. Removal of the Restrainer — 2 Thess 2:6–8 teaches that “he who restrains” will be removed before the Antichrist is revealed. The One powerful enough to restrain the full manifestation of Satan's man is the indwelling Holy Spirit — whose special ministry departs when the Church is removed.
- 4. Absence of the Church in Tribulation Passages — The word *ekklesia* (church) appears 19 times in Rev 1–3 and then disappears entirely from Rev 4–18 (the Tribulation chapters), reappearing in Rev 22:16. The 24 elders in Rev 4–5 are already glorified in heaven before the seals are opened.²¹
- 5. Necessary Interval — Between the Rapture and the Second Coming, time must elapse for: the Bema Seat Judgment of believers (2 Cor 5:10), the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:6–9), and the preparation of the glorified armies who return with Christ (Rev 19:14).
- 6. Rapture vs. Second Coming are Irreconcilable Events if Simultaneous — At the Rapture: believers go up to meet Christ in the air. At the Second Coming: Christ comes down to the earth. At the Rapture: no judgment of earth. At the Second Coming: the nations are judged. These cannot be the same event.
- 7. The 24 Elders Already Glorified in Heaven (Rev 4–5) — Before the first seal is opened, 24 elders are already in heaven wearing crowns (*stephanos* — victor's crowns, awarded at the Bema), dressed in white, and worshipping. This is best understood as the completed, glorified Church already in heaven before the Tribulation begins.²¹

Feature	The Rapture (Phase 1)	The Second Coming / Revelation (Phase 2)
Visibility	Secret — "in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor 15:52)	Public — "every eye will see Him" (Rev 1:7; Matt 24:30)
Location	In the air — believers meet Christ above the earth (1 Thess 4:17)	On the earth — feet stand on Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4)
Timing	Before Daniel's 70th Week; imminent and signless	After 70th Week; preceded by cosmic signs (Matt 24:29–30)
Audience	For the Church — resurrection and transformation of believers	For Israel and the nations — judgment and kingdom establishment
Christ accompanied by	Comes alone to receive the Church (1 Thess 4:16–17)	Comes with the armies of heaven — the Church returns with Him (Rev 19:14)
Purpose	Deliverance of the Church from wrath (1 Thess 5:9)	Judgment of Antichrist, nations; establishment of the Kingdom
Result	Church taken to heaven; Bema Seat Judgment; Marriage Supper	Antichrist destroyed; Israel converted; Millennium established

D. The Order of Events at the Rapture

The sequence in 1 Thess 4:16–17 is precise and sequential.^{20,32}

- The Lord Himself (not an angel) descends from heaven with a commanding shout (keleusma), the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God
- The dead in Christ rise first — Church-age believers who have died receive glorified resurrection bodies
- Living believers are instantly transformed — "in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor 15:52); mortal puts on immortality
- All are caught up together (harpazo) to meet the Lord in the air — a meeting in the atmosphere above the earth
- The Lord brings them to heaven (John 14:2–3) for the Bema Seat Judgment and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

V. THE TRIBULATION PERIOD — DANIEL'S 70TH WEEK

The Tribulation is the 70th and final week of Daniel's 490-year program (Dan 9:27), a period of seven years of unprecedented divine judgment upon Israel and the nations. It is also called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7), "the great tribulation" (Matt 24:21), and "the hour of testing" (Rev 3:10).^{33,10}

► *Fruchtenbaum (Footsteps of the Messiah, pp. 172–173): "In every passage of the Scriptures that the term the Day of Jehovah or the Day of the Lord is found, it is always and without exception a reference to the Tribulation period." This is the most precise statement in the dispensational literature of what the Tribulation is theologically: not merely a period of catastrophe but the concentrated eschatological fulfillment of everything the OT prophets meant by the Day of the LORD — a category encompassing the 550+ OT passages Revelation draws from, the covenant curse judgments of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, and the full weight of Israel's prophetic heritage.*

A. Duration, Structure, and Purpose

- Exactly 7 years = 2,520 days (two halves of 1,260 days each, calculated on the 360-day prophetic year)³³
- Primary purpose for Israel: the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7) — disciplinary judgment that leads to Israel's national repentance and conversion (Zech 12:10–13:1; Rom 11:26)
- Purpose for the nations: divine judgment on a Christ-rejecting world (Rev 6:16–17; 14:7; 16:1)
- Purpose in redemptive history: to bring to completion the six purposes of Dan 9:24, particularly the fulfillment of the New Covenant for Israel

i *Ryrie Study Bible note on Rev 6: "The judgments of the Tribulation are not merely natural disasters or human warfare but the direct expression of the wrath of God and of the Lamb (v.16). The Book of Revelation structures them as three series of seven: seals, trumpets, and bowls, escalating in severity."*

B. The First 3½ Years — The Beginning of Sorrows

The first half of the Tribulation is characterized by the Antichrist's rise, apparent peace, and the opening of the Seal Judgments.^{33,34}

- Antichrist rises to power and confirms a 7-year covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27) — possibly guaranteeing Israel's religious freedom and temple worship
- Apparent peace: the Rider on the White Horse (Rev 6:2) presents himself as a peacemaker — but carries a conqueror's bow
- 144,000 Jewish witnesses sealed and divinely protected (Rev 7:1–8) — 12,000 from each tribe, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom
- A great multitude from every nation saved through their witness (Rev 7:9–17)
- Ministry of the Two Witnesses begins in Jerusalem (Rev 11:3–6): 1,260 days of prophetic proclamation under divine protection

The Seven Seal Judgments (Rev 6) — Individual Effects

The Seal Judgments are opened by Christ Himself (Rev 5:5–6; 6:1) — they are not merely permitted but actively initiated by the Lamb. Each judgment has a specific and distinct effect on the earth.^{34,10}

- Seal 1 — White Horse (Rev 6:1–2): The Antichrist rides forth as a false peacemaker with a crown and a bow but no arrow. Effect: political deception on a global scale; nations accept a false peace. The world is deceived into believing genuine peace has arrived.
- Seal 2 — Red Horse (Rev 6:3–4): Peace is taken from the earth; men slay one another. A great sword is given. Effect: global warfare breaks out across the earth. The false peace of the first seal is shattered. This is war on an unprecedented scale.
- Seal 3 — Black Horse (Rev 6:5–6): A pair of scales; a quart of wheat for a day's wages; a quart of barley for a day's wages. Effect: severe economic famine and hyperinflation. A day's labor buys only one meal. Oil and wine (luxury goods of the wealthy) are protected — economic inequality intensifies catastrophically.

- Seal 4 — Pale (Ashen) Horse (Rev 6:7–8): Rider named Death; Hades follows. Effect: authority given over one-fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts. If the current world population is approximately 8 billion, this seal alone kills 2 billion people. The combined effect of war, starvation, disease, and animal predation.
- Seal 5 — Martyrs Under the Altar (Rev 6:9–11): Souls of those slain for the word of God cry out for justice. Effect: not a judgment on earth but a revelation of the scale of Tribulation martyrdom and God's acknowledgment that justice will come. White robes given; they are told to wait a little longer.
- Seal 6 — Cosmic Upheaval (Rev 6:12–17): Great earthquake; sun black as sackcloth; moon like blood; stars fall; sky splits; every mountain and island moved. Effect: global geological and atmospheric catastrophe. Kings, generals, rich, poor, slave, and free all hide in caves. They cry to the mountains: "Hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Universal recognition that this is divine judgment.
- Seal 7 — Silence in Heaven for Half an Hour (Rev 8:1): Effect: a pregnant pause of awe before the next series of judgments. The seventh seal contains and releases the seven Trumpet Judgments.

i Fruchtenbaum: "The Book of Revelation has no direct quotations from the Old Testament, but it has about 550 references back to the Old Testament. The majority of the things found in the first twenty chapters of the Book of Revelation are found elsewhere in the Old Testament. Only the last two chapters deal with things totally new." The significance for interpretation: the Tribulation is not a New Testament invention. It is the culmination of centuries of OT prophetic development. A reader who knows only Revelation has approximately half the picture; the OT passages Revelation assumes provide the theological framework, the geographic detail, and the legal basis that Revelation's vision narrative presupposes.

C. The Two Witnesses — Identity and Ministry

Revelation 11:3–13 describes two individuals who minister in Jerusalem for the first half of the Tribulation, clothed in sackcloth as a sign of mourning and judgment. Their identity has generated careful debate across the history of biblical interpretation, with three serious candidates emerging from Scripture.^{33,34}

- Their powers: shut the heavens so it does not rain, turn water to blood, strike the earth with plagues as often as they wish
- They are called "the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth" (Rev 11:4; cf. Zech 4:1–14) — symbols of Spirit-empowered witness
- They cannot be killed until their testimony is complete — during their 1,260 days, they are supernaturally protected (Rev 11:5)
- After 1,260 days the Antichrist kills them; the world celebrates for 3½ days (Rev 11:7–10)
- They are resurrected after 3½ days, visibly ascend to heaven while their enemies watch (Rev 11:11–12) — a great earthquake kills 7,000 in Jerusalem

The Three Candidate Identifications

Option 1 — Moses and Elijah (Pentecost, Walvoord — the Majority Dispensational View)

The strongest and most widely held identification among dispensational scholars is Moses and Elijah literally.^{33,34}

- Elijah (for): Malachi 4:5–6 explicitly predicts Elijah's return "before the great and terrible day of the LORD" — a direct OT prophecy pointing to the Tribulation. Jesus confirms this: "Elijah is coming and will restore all things" (Matt 17:11). John the Baptist was Elijah only "in spirit and power" (Luke 1:17), not literally, and this did not exhaust the Malachi prophecy.
- Elijah (for): He was taken to heaven without dying (2 Kgs 2:11) — he has not yet experienced physical death. His return would allow him to die (Rev 11:7), fulfilling the universal human appointment.
- Moses (for): His body was preserved and disputed by Michael and Satan (Jude 9) — a highly unusual circumstance pointing to a future role. He appeared at the Transfiguration alongside Elijah (Matt 17:3), the two standing together on the Mount of Transfiguration as they will stand together in Jerusalem.
- Moses (for): His power over water (turning it to blood) directly mirrors the Egyptian plagues (Exod 7:20); Elijah's power over rain (1 Kgs 17:1; James 5:17) directly mirrors the Two Witnesses' power (Rev 11:6) — the correspondence is exact.

- Weakness: Moses did die physically (Deut 34:5–6); his resurrection would require a prior glorification distinct from the general resurrection. Some scholars resolve this by noting his body was uniquely preserved and may be awaiting exactly this purpose.

Option 2 — Elijah and Enoch (Minority View, Tertullian, Hippolytus; theologically grounded)

A theologically compelling minority case exists for Enoch replacing Moses as the second witness. The argument rests on a principle drawn from Hebrews 9:27 and the unique status of both Enoch and Elijah in redemptive history.

- The Hebrews 9:27 principle: “It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment.” This is the universal human appointment — physical death precedes judgment.
- Enoch and Elijah are the only two human beings in all of Scripture of whom it is clearly stated that they did NOT die: Enoch (Gen 5:24: “he was not, for God took him”; Heb 11:5: “he was taken up so that he would not see death”) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11: “elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven”). All other OT figures who appear after death (Samuel, 1 Sam 28; the saints at the crucifixion, Matt 27:52–53) had previously died. Moses died (Deut 34:5).
- Therefore: if the Two Witnesses must die (Rev 11:7–8), and if Heb 9:27 is universal, then the most logically consistent candidates are the two men for whom physical death is still outstanding — Enoch and Elijah. Their deaths in Jerusalem would fulfill the divine appointment that applies to all humanity.
- Enoch (for): His translation without death (Gen 5:24) is the earliest example of the pattern. He was a prophet (Jude 14–15: “Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied...”), establishing his prophetic credentials for a final prophetic ministry.
- Enoch (for): The absence of Moses-specific powers in Rev 11:6 (water to blood) does not require Moses. The Witnesses’ powers are described as discretionary (“as often as they wish”) — they could employ them in any form God directs.
- Weakness: Malachi 4:5–6 specifically names Elijah, but says nothing of Enoch; a Moses-Enoch pairing loses the explicit OT prophecy of Moses’s unique post-mortem role. The Enoch view works best as a Elijah-Enoch pairing, not as a replacement for Elijah.

Option 3 — Two Unknown Tribulation Prophets (Symbolic / Non-Literal)

- Some interpreters hold that the Two Witnesses are symbolic figures representing the Law and the Prophets, or two unidentified Tribulation-era prophets raised up by God
- This view is generally held by amillennial and some historic premillennial interpreters; it is not the standard dispensational position
- Weakness: Revelation 11 describes specific individuals with specific miraculous powers, specific duration of ministry (1,260 days), a specific location (Jerusalem), a specific death, a specific resurrection, and a specific ascension — the level of concrete particularity argues strongly for literal historical individuals

Conclusion: The View to Follow

i The majority dispensational position (Pentecost, Walvoord, Ryrie) identifies Moses and Elijah as the two witnesses, grounded in the explicit Malachi 4:5–6 prophecy of Elijah’s return and the Moses-Elijah pairing at the Transfiguration. The Enoch-Elijah alternative is theologically serious and deserves acknowledgment: it rests on the Hebrews 9:27 principle that Enoch and Elijah are the only two humans for whom physical death remains outstanding. Both views share the conviction that these are literal, historical individuals — not symbols. The Moses-Elijah identification is preferred but the Enoch-Elijah view is a legitimate and biblically grounded option that should not be dismissed.

D. The Midpoint — The Abomination of Desolation

At the 3½-year mark, the Antichrist dramatically reveals his true character in a series of cataclysmic actions.^{33,10}

- He breaks the 7-year covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27b)
- He invades Israel and enters the rebuilt temple (Dan 9:27; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4)
- He sets up the “abomination of desolation” — an image of himself (Rev 13:14–15) — and demands universal worship
- He proclaims himself God (2 Thess 2:4: “he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God”)

- The Mark of the Beast enforced (Rev 13:16–18): no buying or selling without the mark (chi-xi-stigma, or 666)
- Israel commanded to flee immediately (Matt 24:15–20); a faithful remnant escapes to the wilderness for divine protection (Rev 12:6, 14 — “a place prepared by God”; possibly Petra in Edom)

Matt 24:15–16 *“Therefore when you see the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.”*

E. The Second 3½ Years — The Great Tribulation

The second half of the Tribulation is the period Jesus called “such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will” (Matt 24:21). Divine wrath is poured out in escalating intensity through two further series of seven judgments.^{33,34}

The Seven Trumpet Judgments (Rev 8–9) — Individual Effects

The Trumpet Judgments are announced by seven angels and strike the physical creation, human life, and the demonic realm in escalating severity. Each judgment has a specific and identifiable effect.^{34,10}

- Trumpet 1 (Rev 8:7): Hail and fire mixed with blood hurled to the earth. Effect: one-third of the earth burned up; one-third of trees burned; all green grass burned. Agricultural catastrophe on a continental scale.
- Trumpet 2 (Rev 8:8–9): Something like a great mountain burning with fire thrown into the sea. Effect: one-third of the sea becomes blood; one-third of sea creatures die; one-third of ships destroyed. Catastrophic marine ecology collapse; global commerce paralyzed.
- Trumpet 3 (Rev 8:10–11): A great star called Wormwood falls on one-third of the rivers and springs. Effect: one-third of fresh water becomes bitter; many people die from the bitter water. Fresh water — already scarce from earlier judgments — now poisoned.
- Trumpet 4 (Rev 8:12): One-third of the sun, moon, and stars struck. Effect: one-third of daylight eliminated. The shortening of daylight has cascading effects on agriculture, climate, and human psychology. An angel pronounces three “woes” over the remaining three trumpets.
- Trumpet 5 / Woe 1 (Rev 9:1–12): The abyss opened; a star falls (a demonic being); a smoke-like plague of demonic locusts emerges. Effect: these creatures torment — but do not kill — all who do not have the seal of God for five months. The agony is like a scorpion's sting. Men seek death but cannot find it. Psychological and physical torment beyond anything previously experienced.
- Trumpet 6 / Woe 2 (Rev 9:13–21): Four angels bound at the Euphrates released; a demonic cavalry of 200 million. Effect: one-third of mankind killed by fire, smoke, and brimstone. Combined with Seal 4's 25% death toll, more than half the world's population will have died by this point. Yet Rev 9:20–21: the survivors “did not repent” — the hardness of human hearts in the face of obvious divine judgment.
- Trumpet 7 / Woe 3 (Rev 11:15–19): Loud voices in heaven: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” Effect: not yet a final judgment but a proclamation of the certainty of Christ's coming reign. The seventh trumpet contains and releases the seven Bowl Judgments.

The Seven Bowl Judgments (Rev 16) — The Final Undiluted Wrath of God

The Bowl Judgments are described as “the seven last plagues, because in them the wrath of God is finished” (Rev 15:1). They are poured out in rapid succession with no intervals, representing the final concentrated outpouring of divine fury before the Second Coming.^{34,10}

- Bowl 1 (Rev 16:2): Loathsome and malignant sores break out on all who have the mark of the beast and who worship his image. Effect: physical suffering for the entire Antichrist-worshipping population. There is no medical relief; the sores are described as painful and foul-smelling.
- Bowl 2 (Rev 16:3): The sea becomes blood like that of a dead man. Effect: every living thing in the sea dies. All remaining marine life — not merely one-third as in Trumpet 2 — is destroyed. Global maritime food sources eliminated.
- Bowl 3 (Rev 16:4–7): Rivers and springs become blood. Effect: all remaining fresh water becomes blood. An angel declares: “They poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.” Divine justice — those who shed blood now have nothing to drink but blood.

- Bowl 4 (Rev 16:8–9): The sun is given power to scorch men with fire. Effect: fierce heat; men are scorched with intense heat. Yet “they blasphemed the name of God” and did not repent. The hardening of the human heart continues even as the judgments intensify.
- Bowl 5 (Rev 16:10–11): The throne of the beast is struck; his kingdom becomes darkened. Effect: total darkness over the Antichrist's kingdom; men gnaw their tongues in agony. Combined with the sores of Bowl 1 (still present), the suffering is compounded. Still no repentance.
- Bowl 6 (Rev 16:12–16): The Euphrates River dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. Effect: removal of the geographic barrier between east and west; armies of the world converge on the Valley of Megiddo (Armageddon). Three unclean spirits like frogs (demonic spirits performing signs) go to the kings of the earth to gather them for “the war of the great day of God, the Almighty” (v.14).
- Bowl 7 (Rev 16:17–21): Poured into the air; a loud voice from the throne: “It is done!” Effect: the greatest earthquake in human history; Babylon the great city split into three parts; cities of the nations fall; every island fled; mountains disappeared; enormous hailstones (about 100 pounds each) fall on men. Men blaspheme God because of the plague of hail. The final destruction of human civilization before Christ's return.

i *The telescoping structure: the seventh seal contains the seven trumpets; the seventh trumpet contains the seven bowls. The three series are not strictly sequential but represent increasing intensity and specificity of judgment. The bowls fall in rapid succession at the very end, climaxing in the destruction of Babylon and the preparation for the Second Coming. Walvoord (The Revelation of Jesus Christ) describes this as “a crescendo of divine wrath reaching its climax in the personal return of Jesus Christ.”*

- Fall of Religious Babylon (Rev 17) — the apostate world religious system centered on the Antichrist; destroyed by the ten kings who give their power to the beast
- Fall of Commercial Babylon (Rev 18) — the global economic system; destroyed in one hour; merchants and sea captains mourn; heaven rejoices
- The Campaign of Armageddon (Rev 16:16; Zech 14:1–3): nations converge on Jerusalem for a final assault; the Antichrist's armies mass in the Valley of Megiddo

Israel's Mortality in the Tribulation — Zechariah 13:7–9

The only specific mortality statistic for the nation of Israel during the Tribulation appears not in Revelation but in Zechariah 13:8–9. No NT passage provides this data. Fruchtenbaum (Footsteps of the Messiah, pp. 177–181): “Israel will suffer tremendous persecution (Matthew 24:15–28; Revelation 12:1–17). As a result of this persecution of the Jewish people, two-thirds are going to be killed.”⁴⁴

Zech 13:8–9 *“‘It will come about in all the land,’ declares the LORD, ‘that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”*

- The one-third who survive are not merely Tribulation survivors — they are the refined remnant, brought through fire, who call on God's name and receive the covenant answer: “They are My people.” This is the Millennial Israel — the covenant remnant whose purification the entire Tribulation was designed to accomplish.⁴⁴
- Proportional scale: the Holocaust killed approximately one-third of world Jewry. Zechariah's two-thirds makes the Tribulation's persecution of Israel twice as severe — which explains Jesus' description in Matthew 24:21 as unprecedented in all of history (Dan 12:1).
- Verse 7 explains the cause: “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” The Tribulation is the culmination of the scattering that began at the rejection of Israel's Shepherd. The remnant's conversion ends it: “They will call on My name” (v. 9) — the national confession that Hosea 5:15 and Zechariah 12:10 require before the LORD returns to Jerusalem.

F. The Old Testament Theological Foundation of the Tribulation

The Tribulation is not primarily a New Testament concept. It is the fulfillment of a long-established Old Testament prophetic category — the Day of the LORD — that the Hebrew prophets described in detail across eight centuries before a single line of Revelation was written. The NT describes the events of the Tribulation; the

OT establishes its name, its theological purpose, its legal basis, its mortality statistics, and the geographic detail of its culminating campaign. Both Testaments are required for a complete picture; neither alone is sufficient.

Pentecost, Things to Come, p. 237 (verbatim): "The prophets constantly speak of the day of Jehovah. Descriptions of it are found in such passages as Isaiah 2, the Book of Joel, and Zephaniah 1:14–18. They picture it as a time of great distress and indignation when God arises to shake the earth mightily and to destroy the wicked out of it. One of the clearest descriptions of this period of trouble and judgment is found in Isaiah 24:1–20. This is called especially the time of Jacob's trouble, but he is assured that he shall be saved out of it (Jeremiah 30:7)."

1. The Name and Purpose of the Period: Jeremiah 30:1–17

Jeremiah provides the foundational OT theology of the Tribulation. He names it, defines its purpose, and guarantees its outcome — all of which the NT assumes without restating.

Jer 30:7 (NASB) "Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it."

- **The name:** "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Heb. tsarah). This is the OT name for the period that the NT calls "the great tribulation" (Matt 24:21) and "the hour of testing" (Rev 3:10).
- **The purpose:** disciplinary judgment leading to Israel's national redemption and repentance (Jer 30:11).
- **The guarantee:** "he will be saved from it" (Jer 30:7) — the survival of a faithful remnant is covenantally guaranteed.

2. The Uniqueness of Its Severity: Daniel 12:1

Daniel 12:1 is the OT source text for Jesus' statement in Matthew 24:21. This is a direct quotation — Daniel is primary.

Dan 12:1 (NASB) "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time..."

3. The Day of the LORD Framework: Joel 2; Zephaniah 1; Isaiah 13

The "Day of the LORD" is the OT's own theological category for the Tribulation — broader than it, but concentrated in it. The NT uses the phrase (1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10) but draws its content entirely from the OT prophets, who used it centuries earlier for both near-term national judgments and the final, global Day.

- Joel 2:1–11 — the most vivid OT description of a Tribulation judgment army; background for the Trumpet 5–6 armies of Rev 9.
- Joel 2:31 — "The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the LORD." Peter quotes this directly at Pentecost (Acts 2:20); Rev 6:12 echoes it.
- Zeph 1:14–18 — the most comprehensive OT catalog of Day-of-the-LORD characteristics (quoted above via Pentecost); the Revelation judgment categories draw on this taxonomy.
- Isa 13:6–13 — cosmic signs (sun, moon, and stars darkened; the heavens shaken) applied historically to Babylon's judgment; the OT source for Matt 24:29 and Rev 6:12–14.
- Amos 5:18–20 — the corrective to any reading of the Day of the LORD as blessing alone: "Woe to you who are longing for the day of the LORD... It will be darkness and not light." This corrective appears nowhere in the NT.

4. Israel's Mortality Statistic: Zechariah 13:8–9

Zechariah 13:8–9 (treated in full above under "Israel's Mortality in the Tribulation") supplies the only specific casualty figure for the nation during the Tribulation — two-thirds cut off, one-third refined as a remnant — with no NT parallel. The one-third who survive are the purified remnant who enter the Millennial Kingdom described in Appendix G, restored as "My people" with God as "My God" (Zech 13:9).

5. The Geographic Detail for Armageddon: Joel 3; Zechariah 12; Isaiah 63

Revelation 16:16 names the Armageddon staging area but supplies no geographic narrative of the campaign itself. The OT fills in the detail Revelation assumes.

- Joel 3:2, 12 — “I will gather all the nations ... and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat.” Joel names the judgment location east of Jerusalem.
- Zech 12:2–3 — Jerusalem as “a cup of reeling” and “a heavy stone for all peoples” explains why all nations converge on the city.
- Isaiah 63:1–6 identifies Christ’s geographic route through Edom/Bozrah during the campaign’s final phase — treated in full below under Section VI.B, “The Geographic Route.”

6. The Legal Basis in the Covenant Curses: Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28

The most foundational, and most overlooked, OT contribution to Tribulation theology: the judgments are not arbitrary. They are the Mosaic covenant curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 — warned against Israel for persistent covenant unfaithfulness — reaching their eschatological climax.

- Lev 26:14–39; Deut 28:15–68 list the covenant curses: sword, famine, pestilence, wild beasts, exile, darkness, plague — identical in category to the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl judgments of Revelation cataloged above and in Appendix H.
- Randall Price identifies the Deuteronomy 28 covenant-curse catalog as the OT legal foundation for the Tribulation judgment categories — a dimension entirely absent from the NT itself.

7. The OT–NT Relationship: Direction of Dependence

Points 1–6 show a consistent pattern: the OT supplies the Tribulation’s name, severity, theological framework, mortality statistics, campaign geography, and legal basis; the NT describes its events in narrative and apocalyptic form. The direction of dependence runs consistently OT → NT — the OT is the foundation, the NT the superstructure built upon it. Appendix H presents the OT–NT Master Prophetic Relationship Matrix documenting this relationship across both the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom.

VI. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST — THE REVELATION

The Second Coming is the visible, bodily, glorious return of Jesus Christ to the earth at the close of the Tribulation. It is the most predicted event in all of Scripture — occurring more than 300 times in the Old Testament and more than 1 in 30 New Testament verses.^{35,36}

A. The Two Distinct Phases of Christ's Return

A fundamental error in prophetic interpretation is the conflation of the Rapture and the Second Coming into a single event. Scripture presents two distinct phases, separated by the full seven-year Tribulation period.^{30,31}

B. Events Immediately Preceding the Second Coming

- Cosmic signs: sun darkened, moon gives no light, stars fall, powers of heaven shaken (Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12–14)
- The sign of the Son of Man appears in the sky — all the tribes of the earth mourn when they see it (Matt 24:30; Zech 12:10–12)³⁶
- The Campaign of Armageddon reaches its climax: nations assembled against Jerusalem; the city is partially taken (Zech 14:1–2)
- Israel's remnant cries out for Messiah in a national prayer of repentance (Zech 12:10; Hos 5:15–6:3)

The Geographic Route — Isaiah 63:1–6 and Bozrah/Edom

The geographic detail of the Second Coming's final approach is provided not by Revelation but by Isaiah 63:1–6. Fruchtenbaum (Footsteps of the Messiah, pp. 261–268) identifies this passage as describing Christ returning through Bozrah in Edom (modern southern Jordan), where He has gathered the surviving Jewish remnant who fled to the wilderness (Rev 12:6, 14 — the Petra/Bozrah region). The route runs: Bozrah → northward through the Jordan Valley → Jerusalem.^{44,72}

Isa 63:1–2 *“Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength?” “It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press?”*

- Isaiah 63 is the OT source for Revelation 19:13 (robe dipped in blood) and 19:15 (treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God). Revelation provides the cosmic scene; Isaiah provides the geography and the winepress imagery. Both are required for the complete picture.⁴⁴
- The route through Edom is not arbitrary: the Jewish remnant fled to the wilderness of Edom/Petra during the Great Tribulation (Rev 12:6, 14; Matt 24:16 — “flee to the mountains”). Christ's first act of the Second Coming is to gather His people from their refuge before advancing to Jerusalem.
- Isaiah 63:3: “I have trodden the wine trough alone; and from the peoples there was no man with Me.” Christ acts alone in this campaign — no human army delivers Israel. The victory is entirely His.

C. The Events of the Second Coming (Rev 19:11–21)

Revelation 19:11–16 is the great climactic passage: heaven opens, and the Warrior-King appears on a white horse.^{34,21}

- “Faithful and True” — Christ comes in faithfulness to His covenant promises and in true justice (Rev 19:11)
- His eyes are a flame of fire; on His head are many diadems (crowns of dominion); His robe is dipped in blood (Rev 19:12–13)
- The armies of heaven follow Him — clothed in fine linen, white and clean — the glorified saints who returned with Him from heaven (Rev 19:14; Zech 14:5; 1 Thess 3:13)
- From His mouth comes a sharp sword to strike down the nations; He rules with a rod of iron (Rev 19:15; Ps 2:9)³⁶

- National repentance and mourning of Israel: “they will look on Me whom they have pierced” (Zech 12:10); a spirit of grace and supplication poured out
- Christ’s feet stand on the Mount of Olives — the mountain splits in two from east to west, creating a great valley (Zech 14:4)
- Living waters flow from Jerusalem eastward to the Dead Sea and westward to the Mediterranean (Zech 14:8)
- Antichrist’s armies destroyed by the Word of Christ — their flesh consumes away, eyes rot in their sockets, tongues consumed (Zech 14:12–15; Rev 19:21)
- The Antichrist and the False Prophet are seized and cast alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev 19:20) — the first human occupants of this eternal judgment
- Satan is bound and imprisoned in the abyss for 1,000 years (Rev 20:1–3)

VII. THE PROGRAM OF RESURRECTIONS

Scripture does not teach a single general resurrection of all the dead at the end of history. Rather, it presents resurrection as a program unfolding in stages across multiple events — ordered, purposeful, and tied to the prophetic calendar. Paul's agricultural metaphor in 1 Corinthians 15 captures this: firstfruits, then the full harvest, then the final gleanings.^{37,4}

Group	Event	Timing	Scripture
Christ the Firstfruits	Resurrection of Jesus	Easter Sunday, AD 33	1 Cor 15:20–23 — the prototype and guarantee of all future resurrection
OT saints at crucifixion	"Many holy ones" raised	Immediately after resurrection (Matt 27:52–53)	A preview or firstfruits of the OT resurrection; appeared to many in Jerusalem
Church-age believers	Rapture resurrection	At the Rapture (pre-Trib)	1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 15:51–52 — dead raised, living transformed
OT saints + Trib martyrs	First resurrection completed	At the Second Coming	Dan 12:2; Rev 20:4–6 — "blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection"
All unsaved of all ages	Second resurrection (of the wicked)	End of Millennium	Rev 20:11–15 — resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgment

A. The First Resurrection — The Resurrection of the Righteous (Luke 14:14; Rev 20:5–6)

The "first resurrection" is not a single event but a category — the resurrection of all who belong to Christ. It occurs in multiple installments across redemptive history.³⁷

- Christ as Firstfruits (1 Cor 15:20–23): His resurrection is the prototype, guarantee, and first installment of all future resurrection. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."³²
- The "many holy ones" at the crucifixion (Matt 27:52–53): a preview resurrection immediately after Christ's death; they appeared to many in Jerusalem. A foretaste of what is coming.
- Church-age believers at the Rapture (1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 15:51–52): the dead raised; the living transformed. This completes the Rapture and begins the glorified Church's time in heaven.
- Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs at the Second Coming (Dan 12:1–2; Rev 20:4–6): "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power."

i Ryrie Study Bible note on Dan 12:2: "The resurrection described here is that of OT and Tribulation saints at the time of the Second Coming... bringing to completion the first (righteous) resurrection. Some to everlasting life (the saved); some to disgrace and everlasting contempt (the unsaved — but this is the second resurrection, which occurs after the Millennium)."

B. The Second Resurrection — The Resurrection of the Unrighteous (John 5:29; Rev 20:11–15)

- All unsaved of all ages — from Cain to the last rebel at the end of the Millennium — are resurrected in physical bodies³⁷
- This resurrection occurs at the end of the Millennium, 1,000 years after the First Resurrection is completed
- Its sole purpose: to bring the unsaved before the Great White Throne for judgment
- The result is the second death — the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14–15) — eternal, conscious, punitive separation from God
- Between the first and second resurrections stretches the Millennium — a 1,000-year interval the Bible calls "blessed and holy" for all who participate in the first resurrection

VIII. THE DIVINE PROGRAM OF JUDGMENTS

Scripture presents not one final judgment but a series of distinct divine judgments, each differing in time, subjects, basis, and result. Confusing these — particularly by merging the Bema Seat with the Great White Throne — produces serious theological error about the security of the believer and the nature of eternal punishment.^{38,12}

Judgment	Time	Subjects	Basis & Result
Sin at Calvary	Past — AD 33	Christ as substitute	Once-for-all; no condemnation for believers (John 5:24; Rom 8:1; Heb 9:26)
Self-judgment	Present age	Believers	Ongoing self-examination to avoid divine discipline (1 Cor 11:31–32; Heb 12:5–11)
Bema Seat	After Rapture	Church-age believers	Works evaluated for rewards; not for condemnation (2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:12–15)
Living Israel	After 2nd Coming	Jewish survivors of Tribulation	Purged and refined; rebels removed; remnant enters Kingdom (Ezek 20:33–38)
Sheep & Goats	After 2nd Coming	Gentile survivors of Tribulation	Basis: treatment of Christ's "brethren." Sheep → Kingdom; Goats → eternal fire (Matt 25:31–46)
Fallen Angels & Satan	End of Millennium	Satan + fallen angels	Satan cast into Lake of Fire (Rev 20:10); angels judged (Jude 6; 1 Cor 6:3)
Great White Throne	End of Millennium	All unsaved of all ages	Works judged; all absent from Book of Life; Lake of Fire — the second death (Rev 20:11–15)

A. Judgment of Sin at Calvary — Completed

The judicial judgment of the believer's sin was fully discharged at the cross. Christ bore the penalty in the place of the guilty. The verdict for the one in Christ: no condemnation, ever.²³

- John 5:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life"
- Rom 8:1: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"
- Heb 9:26: Christ appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" — once, completely, forever

B. Self-Judgment of Believers — Present Age

- 1 Cor 11:31–32: "if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world"
- Heb 12:5–11: divine discipline (paideia — child-training) is the corrective process God uses when self-judgment fails
- Ongoing self-examination and confession (1 John 1:9) maintains fellowship, not standing, with the Father

C. Bema Seat Judgment of Believers — After the Rapture

All Church-age believers must appear before the Judgment Seat (bema) of Christ to give account of their lives. This is not a judgment of salvation (which is eternally secure) but of stewardship — how they used what God entrusted to them.^{12,39,24}

- 2 Cor 5:10: "we must all appear before the judgment seat (bema) of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body" — the bema was the raised platform in a Greek stadium where the judge awarded prizes to winners

- 1 Cor 3:12–15: works tested by fire — gold, silver, precious stones survive; wood, hay, stubble are consumed. “If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire”
- Five crowns mentioned in the NT: Incorruptible Crown (1 Cor 9:25), Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thess 2:19), Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim 4:8), Crown of Life (Rev 2:10), Crown of Glory (1 Pet 5:4)
- The awards are cast at Christ’s feet (Rev 4:10) — all glory returned to Him

i Ryrie Study Bible note on 2 Cor 5:10: “The bema was not a criminal court but the platform on which the agonothetes (judge of the games) sat to evaluate and reward the athletes’ performance. No punishment is in view here — only loss of reward or gain of reward. The believer’s salvation is never in question.”

D. Judgment of Living Israel — After the Second Coming

- After Christ returns, surviving Jews from the Tribulation are gathered for a divine “purging” (Ezek 20:33–38)³⁶
- “Rebels” who refused to return to the LORD are removed and do not enter the Kingdom
- The believing remnant — those who mourned at the sight of Christ (Zech 12:10–12) and were covered by the New Covenant — enter the Millennial Kingdom as the nucleus of restored Israel
- This is the fulfillment of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31–34) and the Palestinian Covenant (Deut 30:3–6) in their fullest national application

E. Judgment of Living Gentiles — The Sheep and Goat Judgment (Matt 25:31–46)

Immediately following the Second Coming, Gentile survivors of the Tribulation are gathered for judgment. This is not the Great White Throne — it involves living mortal people who survive the Tribulation, not the resurrected dead.³⁸

- The King “separates them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Matt 25:32)
- Basis of judgment: treatment of “these brothers of Mine” during the Tribulation — most likely the 144,000 Jewish witnesses or Jewish believers who were proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom
- “Sheep” (righteous Gentiles): “Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” — they enter the Millennium as mortals
- “Goat” Gentiles: “Go away into eternal punishment” — excluded from the Kingdom; cast into eternal fire
- Their works reflect their faith: they were believers who demonstrated saving faith by risking their lives to help God’s Jewish messengers

F. Judgment of Fallen Angels and Satan — End of the Millennium

- Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire where the Antichrist and False Prophet already are (Rev 20:10): “tormented day and night forever and ever”
- Fallen angels judged (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; 1 Cor 6:3 — believers will participate in this judgment)
- The abyss (Rev 20:3) held Satan for 1,000 years; the Lake of Fire is his eternal, final confinement

G. The Great White Throne Judgment — End of the Millennium (Rev 20:11–15)

The final judicial act of history. All unsaved of all ages stand before the omniscient God for their definitive verdict.^{38,15}

- The present heavens and earth “fled away” from the face of the Judge — the present creation dissolves
- “Books” opened: the record of every thought, word, and deed — works are the basis of degree of punishment (not of salvation or damnation)
- The “Book of Life” opened: no name of any person standing there is found in it — their damnation is confirmed by absence
- All are judged “according to their deeds” (Rev 20:13) — the lost are judged by works to establish degree of punishment; salvation is not in view since none present are saved

- Death (physical death) and Hades (the realm of the dead) are themselves cast into the Lake of Fire — the second death
- “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:15)

IX. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

The Millennium is the literal, physical, 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth, established immediately after the Second Coming. It is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, the centerpiece of OT prophetic expectation, and the stage upon which God demonstrates what redeemed humanity under perfect governance looks like.^{22,11,15}

A. The Literal 1,000 Years — Why the Number Must Be Taken at Face Value

The term “one thousand years” (Greek: *chilia etē*) appears six times in Rev 20:1–7. Amillennial and postmillennial interpreters treat this as symbolic. The dispensational and pretribulational position treats it as a literal duration, consistent with the same literal hermeneutic applied throughout prophetic Scripture.^{22,5}

- The six occurrences in Rev 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 all refer to the same period — the consistency requires a single literal duration
- OT prophecy demands a literal, earthly period of Messianic reign before the eternal state: Isa 2:2–4; 11:1–10; 65:17–25; Mic 4:1–5; Zech 14:9–21
- The unconditional Davidic Covenant requires a literal earthly reign on David's literal throne in literal Jerusalem (2 Sam 7:12–16; Luke 1:32–33)
- Amillennialism's identification of the Millennium with the present Church Age is refuted by Rev 20: Satan is currently not bound (1 Pet 5:8), believers are not currently reigning, and the conditions of Isa 11 are clearly not present

B. Government and Administration

The Millennial Kingdom is a theocracy — the direct, personal rule of Jesus Christ, the God-Man, on the earth. It will be the most just and righteous government in human history.²²

- The King: Jesus Christ reigns from Jerusalem on the throne of David (Isa 9:6–7; Jer 23:5–6; Luke 1:32–33; Rev 19:15–16)¹¹
- Co-regents: glorified saints — Church, OT, and Tribulation believers — reign with Christ in various administrative capacities (Rev 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12; Matt 19:28)
- David as prince under Christ, reigning over restored national Israel (Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos 3:5)
- Twelve apostles ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28)
- Righteous administration: “He will judge between the nations”; disputes resolved instantly and justly (Isa 2:4; 11:3–5)

C. Physical and Environmental Conditions

The earth in the Millennium is transformed toward pre-Fall conditions. The curse on creation, while not entirely lifted until the new earth, is dramatically reversed.^{22,11}

- The wolf dwells with the lamb; the leopard lies down with the goat; the child plays over the cobra's den (Isa 11:6–9) — predation ceases in the animal kingdom
- The desert blooms as a rose; waters break forth in the wilderness (Isa 35:1–2, 6–7)
- Human lifespans vastly extended: “The youth will die at the age of one hundred” (Isa 65:20) — death from old age still exists among mortal residents but is rare
- Universal knowledge of God: “The earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14)
- Jerusalem as the world capital: nations stream to Jerusalem to worship; the Feast of Tabernacles observed by all (Zech 14:16–19)
- The Millennial Temple (Ezek 40–48): a literal, magnificent temple built in Jerusalem; the glory of God returns (Ezek 43:1–5); memorial sacrifices instituted — looking back to the cross as the Lord's Supper looks back today

D. Israel in the Kingdom — Including the Land Boundaries

- Israel is fully saved, nationally converted, and exalted as head of the nations (Rom 11:26; Deut 28:13)¹¹
- All four unconditional covenants fully and literally fulfilled: land (Palestinian), throne (Davidic), spiritual regeneration (New), seed (Abrahamic)
- Jerusalem is the political and spiritual center of the world (Isa 2:2–3; Mic 4:1–2; Zech 8:20–23)
- “So the nations will fear the name of the LORD and all the kings of the earth Your glory” (Ps 102:15)

The Southern Boundary: The River of Egypt — Wadi el-Arish or the Nile?

Genesis 15:18 defines the southern boundary of the Abrahamic land grant as running “from the river of Egypt” (Hebrew: nahar Mitzraim) to the Euphrates. The identification of this “river of Egypt” is one of the most carefully debated questions in OT land covenant studies, and the answer has significant implications for the total extent of the covenant land.^{63,64,65}

View 1 — Wadi el-Arish (the Brook of Egypt) — Popular Evangelical View

- Many commentators distinguish between two different Hebrew terms: nahar Mitzraim (river/stream of Egypt, Gen 15:18) and nachal Mitzraim (brook/wadi of Egypt, Num 34:5; Josh 15:4, 47; 1 Kgs 8:65; 2 Kgs 24:7; Isa 27:12; Ezek 47:19)
- The nachal Mitzraim is widely identified as Wadi el-Arish, the seasonal stream on the NE edge of the Sinai Peninsula that forms the traditional border between Egypt and Canaan
- Proponents argue that the covenant land boundary in Gen 15:18 (nahar) and the administrative boundary in Num 34:5 (nachal) both refer to the same Wadi el-Arish, using slightly different but synonymous terms for a watercourse
- This interpretation keeps the covenant land within geographically reasonable bounds and matches the description in Numbers 34 used for the actual tribal allotments

View 2 — The Nile River — The View of Ryrie, Pentecost, and Walvoord (the View to Follow)

The majority position among the leading DTS dispensational scholars — Ryrie, Pentecost, and Walvoord — is that the “river of Egypt” in Genesis 15:18 refers to the Nile, not to the Wadi el-Arish. This identification is supported by both the Hebrew terminology and the LXX evidence.^{63,65,64}

- The Hebrew term in Gen 15:18 is nahar (נָהָר), the standard Hebrew word for a major, perennial river. It is the same word used for the Euphrates (Gen 2:14; 15:18) and for the Nile (Gen 41:1–3; Exod 1:22). It is NOT nachal, which typically denotes a seasonal wadi or brook.
- The LXX (Septuagint) translates nahar Mitzraim in Gen 15:18 as ποταμός (potamos), the Greek word for a wide, flowing river — the same term used for the Nile and the Euphrates in the LXX. This is linguistically significant: potamos is never used for a seasonal wadi or brook; that would be χεῖμαρρος (cheimarros), a rain-swollen torrent.
- The contrast is exegetically decisive: Gen 15:18 uses nahar/potamos (major perennial river) while Num 34:5 uses nachal/cheimarros (wadi/brook). These are not the same word in Hebrew or Greek, and should not be conflated without textual justification.
- Pentecost (Things to Come, pp. 89–90) argues that the Abrahamic land grant is deliberately bounded by the two greatest rivers of the ancient Near East: the Nile in the southwest and the Euphrates in the northeast — encompassing an area of approximately 300,000–350,000 square miles, far exceeding anything Israel has ever controlled.
- Walvoord (Israel in Prophecy, p. 53) concurs: the southern boundary of Gen 15:18 is the Nile, giving the covenant land a scope that has never been possessed by Israel and therefore demands a future literal Millennial fulfillment.
- Ryrie Study Bible note on Gen 15:18: “The river of Egypt is the Nile, not the Wadi el-Arish (the Brook of Egypt of Num 34:5). The promised land thus extends from the Nile to the Euphrates — far greater than anything Israel has yet possessed.”

► *The practical implication: if the southern boundary is the Nile, the covenant land grant encompasses the entire Sinai Peninsula and a portion of NE Egypt up to the Nile Delta — an area currently under Egyptian sovereignty. This is consistent with the view that the Millennial Kingdom involves a fundamental reconfiguration of the political geography of the ancient Near East, with Israel in possession of every acre of the divinely promised territory for the first time in history. The Wadi el-Arish view significantly reduces this scope. Both views agree Israel has never fully possessed the land; the Nile view makes the unfulfilled scope even more dramatic.*

i Note on terminology summary: Gen 15:18 — *nahar Mitzraim* (Hebrew) / *potamos* (LXX) = major perennial river = the Nile (Ryrie, Pentecost, Walvoord). Num 34:5; Josh 15:4 — *nachal Mitzraim* (Hebrew) / *cheimarros* (LXX) = seasonal wadi = Wadi el-Arish. These are textually distinct. The confusion arises from English translations that render both as “river of Egypt” without noting the Hebrew/Greek distinction.

E. Population and Moral Conditions

The Millennium is populated by two kinds of inhabitants: glorified saints in resurrected immortal bodies (who do not procreate) and mortal survivors of the Tribulation (who do).²²

- Mortal survivors — believing Jews and Gentiles who entered the Kingdom in natural bodies — repopulate the earth across 1,000 years
- Their children are born with the sin nature and must personally believe; not all do
- Sin is still possible in mortal human nature; Christ rules with a rod of iron (Rev 19:15; Ps 2:9) — swift, perfect justice
- Satan is entirely absent (bound in the abyss) — unlike the present age; but indwelling sin remains
- This demonstrates that human failure is not merely a result of satanic influence but of the fallen nature itself — validating the final rebellion

F. The Gentile Nations in the Millennial Kingdom

Scripture does not present the Millennium as exclusively an Israeli program. The Gentile nations who survive the Tribulation and the Sheep and Goat Judgment (Matt 25:31–46) enter the Millennial Kingdom in their national identities and participate in its blessings under Messianic governance. Fruchtenbaum (Footsteps of the Messiah, Chapter 20) provides the most developed treatment of this topic in the dispensational literature.⁴⁴

- Subject to Messianic governance from Jerusalem — all nations come under Christ’s direct rule (Isa 2:2–4; Ps 2:8–9; Zech 14:9). There is no independent Gentile sovereignty in the Millennium; all national authority is delegated from the throne of David in Jerusalem.⁴⁴
- Annual Feast of Tabernacles pilgrimage (Zech 14:16–19) — all surviving Gentile nations are required to send representatives to Jerusalem annually for Sukkot. Nations that refuse face the withdrawal of rain, a judgment calibrated to agricultural economies. Egypt is specifically named as a test case (Zech 14:18–19).
- Egypt and Assyria as a triple blessing with Israel (Isa 19:23–25) — “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.” These three ancient antagonists become co-participants in Millennial blessing. They are not absorbed into Israel’s tribal structure but occupy the sovereignty zone within the Abrahamic grant, under Israel’s Messianic primacy.⁴⁴
- Gentile nations retain distinct identities throughout the Millennium — nations are not dissolved into a single world state. They enter the Millennium as nations (Matt 25:32; Rev 21:24, 26) and remain as nations for 1,000 years, governed under Israel’s primacy but retaining their own character and culture.

i Fruchtenbaum’s framework for Gentiles in the Kingdom resolves a question the current outline leaves implicit: What happens to non-Jewish believers who survive the Tribulation? They enter the Kingdom in their national identities, participate in the Feast of Tabernacles, come under the rod of iron governance of Christ, and ultimately produce the population of mortal humans whose descendants fill the earth across the Millennium — some of whom will join Satan’s final rebellion (Rev 20:7–9).

G. The Old Testament Portrait of the Kingdom — Primary Passages

The systematic description of the Millennial Kingdom in subsections A–E above rests on a foundation of specific, detailed Old Testament prophecy. The following passages are not supplementary background — they are the primary evidence. Together they demonstrate that the Millennial Kingdom is not a New Testament afterthought but the great expectation of the Hebrew prophets, described in sweeping, concrete, and geographical terms that demand a literal, physical, earthly fulfillment.^{68,67,66}

The seven passages surveyed below (H–N) are the primary texts; they are not exhaustive. For a full quantitative count of OT Kingdom references, a twelve-theme classification matrix, and a canon-wide distribution table covering every major passage — including books not surveyed in detail here — see Appendix G, “The Kingdom Promised: OT Reference Supplement.”

H. Isaiah 2:1–4 — Jerusalem as the World Capital of Justice and Peace

Isa 2:2–4 *“Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.”*

This passage describes the Millennial Kingdom with unmistakable geographic and political specificity. It cannot refer to the Church Age, in which Jerusalem is not the world capital, nations are not streaming to it for divine instruction, and swords have most certainly not been beaten into plowshares.^{69,72,66}

- “In the last days” (b’āchərīt hayyāmīm): a technical phrase in Hebrew prophecy for the Messianic era — the culmination of history
- “The mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains”: Zion/Jerusalem elevated geographically (cf. Zech 14:10) and politically as the seat of world government
- “All the nations will stream to it”: a literal pilgrimage of Gentile nations to Jerusalem for divine instruction (cf. Zech 14:16–19)
- “The law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”: Jerusalem as the legislative and judicial center of the entire earth under Messiah’s direct governance
- “They will hammer their swords into plowshares”: global disarmament under divine governance — never true at any point in human history; awaits the Millennium
- Parallel passage: Mic 4:1–5 uses virtually identical language — two independent prophets confirm the same literal expectation⁷¹

I. Isaiah 11:1–16 — The Branch and the Nature of the Kingdom

Isaiah 11 is perhaps the richest single chapter on Millennial conditions in all of Scripture. It begins with the Messiah’s character (vv.1–5), moves to the transformed natural order (vv.6–9), and concludes with Israel’s worldwide regathering (vv.10–16).^{69,72,80}

Isa 11:1–2 *“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”*

- The “shoot from Jesse”: Jesus Christ, the ultimate Son of David. Jesse is David’s father — going back to the root emphasizes the Davidic lineage through what appeared to be a “stump” after the exile.
- The sevenfold Spirit (v.2): wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear of the LORD, and the Spirit of the LORD — the full endowment of the Holy Spirit on Messiah
- His judicial character (vv.3–5): He will not judge by sight or hearing but by righteousness; “with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (v.4b; cf. 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:15)

Isa 11:6–9 *“And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”*

- Predation ceases: The wolf and lamb, leopard and goat, lion and ox dwell together — not allegorically but physically. The Adamic curse on the animal creation (Gen 3:14–18) is substantially reversed.
- “A little boy will lead them”: the predator-prey relationship so restructured that a child can lead wild animals — the ultimate picture of restored creation safety
- Venomous serpents harmless to infants: the child plays at the cobra’s hole without danger — the curse on the serpent (Gen 3:14–15) has not yet been fully reversed but its effects on human vulnerability are removed
- “The earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (v.9): universal, saturating, inescapable knowledge of God — not through global evangelism alone but through the direct presence of the Messianic King

Verses 10–16 describe the worldwide regathering of Israel from every corner of the earth — a second regathering following the Assyrian and Babylonian dispersals, and distinct from the modern State of Israel (which is a partial precursor, not the final fulfillment).^{69,80}

- Isa 11:11: “The Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people” — the first recovery was from Babylon; the second is the final Millennial regathering
- Regathered from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the islands of the sea — every corner of the ancient world; by extension, every nation today
- Isa 11:13: The historic rivalry between Ephraim (northern kingdom) and Judah (southern kingdom) will permanently end — Israel will be one unified nation under Messiah
- Isa 11:15–16: The LORD will dry up the Euphrates and make a highway from Assyria — recapitulating the Exodus miracle for the final regathering

J. Isaiah 65:17–25 — The New Creation and Millennial Life Described

Isaiah 65:17–25 is often misread as a description of the eternal state. A careful reading shows it describes the Millennium (sin and death still exist, v.20; Messiah is in view) rather than the eternal state (where there is no more death, Rev 21:4). The “new heavens and new earth” of v.17 refers to the dramatically renewed Millennial creation, not the final new creation of Rev 21.^{69,72,81}

Isa 65:17–20 *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness... No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed.”*

- Death still exists (v.20): “the youth will die at the age of one hundred” — in the eternal state there is no death (Rev 21:4); therefore this passage must describe the Millennium, not eternity
- Sin still possible (v.20): “the sinner being cursed at the age of one hundred” — sin, though rare and immediately punished, still exists among mortal Millennial inhabitants
- Extended lifespans (v.20): dying at 100 is considered dying young — lifespans return toward pre-Flood longevity (Isa 65:22: “like the days of a tree”)

Isa 65:21–25 *“They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build and another inhabit, they will not plant and another eat... My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity... The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain.”*

- Economic security: people build their own houses and eat their own produce — the curse of dispossession (Deut 28:30) is reversed
- Labor fruitful: “they will not labor in vain” — the Adamic curse of frustrating toil (Gen 3:17–19) is substantially reversed in the Millennium
- Children a blessing, not a sorrow: no more “children born for calamity” — infant mortality eliminated, generational blessing restored
- The animal kingdom at peace: wolf and lamb graze together (Isa 11 repeated) — confirming this is the same Millennial era

K. Isaiah 66:7–24 — Israel's Sudden Birth as a Nation and Millennial Worship

Isaiah 66 closes the book with a vision of both the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal state. The key Millennial elements include the sudden national birth of Israel and the establishment of worldwide worship centered on Jerusalem.^{69,72,81}

Isa 66:7–8 *“Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.”*

- The metaphor of birth without labor pains: Israel's national conversion will occur suddenly and completely at the Second Coming — not gradually. “All Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26) in a moment of national recognition and repentance (Zech 12:10)

- Isa 66:18–20: People from all nations and tongues come to see God's glory in Jerusalem; survivors go out as missionaries to the nations; Gentiles bring dispersed Israelites back "on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on camels"
- Isa 66:21: God will take some of these returning Israelites as priests and Levites — the Levitical order restored in the Millennium
- Isa 66:22–23: The new heavens and new earth persist; all flesh comes to worship the LORD from Sabbath to Sabbath in Jerusalem — universal, recurring, physical pilgrimage worship

L. Zechariah 14 — The Second Coming and Millennial Kingdom in Detail

Zechariah 14 is the most comprehensive single chapter on the Second Coming and Millennial Kingdom in the OT. It moves from the final assault on Jerusalem to the return of Christ, the geographic transformation of the land, and the establishment of worldwide Millennial worship.^{70,73,82}

Zech 14:1–2 — The Final Assault on Jerusalem

Zech 14:1–2 *"Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city."*

- The nations gather against Jerusalem: the Campaign of Armageddon reaches its climax with a direct military assault on the city itself
- Half the city goes into exile: even as the nations appear on the verge of total victory, God intervenes
- The believing remnant is preserved: "the rest of the people will not be cut off" — God supernaturally protects His chosen before the end

Zech 14:3–5 — The Second Coming and the Mount of Olives

Zech 14:3–5 *"Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south... Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!"*

- "His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives": a literal, physical, bodily return to the exact spot from which Jesus ascended (Acts 1:9–11). The angel said He would return "in just the same way" as He departed.
- The Mount of Olives splits east to west: a great earthquake creates a new valley running east-west, providing an escape route for Jerusalem's inhabitants and transforming the topography of the region
- "All the holy ones with Him": the glorified saints — angels and Church-age believers — return with Christ (1 Thess 3:13; Jude 14; Rev 19:14)

Zech 14:6–11 — Physical Transformation of the Land

Zech 14:8, 10 *"And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter... All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site..."*

- Living waters (v.8): a perennial river flows from Jerusalem eastward to the Dead Sea and westward to the Mediterranean — parallel to Ezekiel's river (Ezek 47:1–12) that heals the Dead Sea. This is literal, physical, geographical transformation.
- The Dead Sea healed (Ezek 47:8–9): the waters of the river make the previously dead salt sea "fresh"; fish will abound where no fish can live today
- The land flattened (v.10): the surrounding terrain drops to a plain while Jerusalem is elevated — the geographic exaltation of the city fulfilling Isa 2:2
- Jerusalem secure (v.11): "there will no longer be a curse" over Jerusalem; the city will be permanently inhabited in safety

Zech 14:12–15 — The Defeat of the Antichrist's Armies

Zech 14:12 *"Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth."*

- The plague: instantaneous, catastrophic disintegration of the enemy armies — reminiscent of supernatural divine judgment, possibly including intense heat or radiation phenomena, though the precise mechanism is divine
- Horses and mules struck similarly (v.15): the entire military apparatus of the nations is destroyed
- This is the judgment described in Rev 19:17–21, where the angel calls birds to the "great supper of God" to eat the flesh of the fallen armies

Zech 14:16–21 — Millennial Worship from All Nations

Zech 14:16–17 *"Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them."*

- Annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem required of all nations: even former enemies who survive the Tribulation must come to Jerusalem to worship the King
- The Feast of Booths (Tabernacles): the OT festival commemorating Israel's wilderness journey becomes the annual Millennial worship festival for all nations — its theme of "dwelling with God" finds its ultimate fulfillment
- Immediate natural consequences for non-compliance (vv.17–19): no rain for nations that refuse to come — environmental enforcement of Millennial worship requirements; direct, just, and impossible to dispute
- Universal holiness (vv.20–21): "HOLY TO THE LORD" inscribed on the bells of horses and on cooking pots in Jerusalem — the distinction between sacred and common is obliterated; all of life is consecrated to God

i Ryrie Study Bible note on Zech 14:16: *"This annual pilgrimage of the nations confirms the literal, physical, geographical character of the Millennium. It cannot be spiritualized as the Church coming to God in worship, because (1) it is the nations who were judged at the Second Coming who are required to come; (2) rain is withheld from those who refuse; (3) the Feast of Booths had a specific Jewish calendar meaning that makes sense only in a restored Israel context."*

M. Micah 4:1–5 — The Mountain of the LORD and the End of War

Micah 4:1–5 is virtually identical to Isaiah 2:2–4, confirming through independent prophetic testimony that these Kingdom descriptions are literal prophetic expectation, not poetic hyperbole.^{71,66}

Mic 4:1–3 *"And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains... And many nations will come and say, 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths.' For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war."*

- Global disarmament (v.3): "swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks" — military hardware repurposed for agriculture; not as a human achievement but as a result of Messiah's righteous governance
- "Every man will sit under his vine and under his fig tree" (v.4): the image of personal security, agrarian prosperity, and settled peace — the reversal of the curses of war and dispossession
- "For the LORD of hosts has spoken" (v.4): the authority behind this promise is divine oath, not human optimism
- "Other nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever" (v.5): Israel's exclusive devotion to Yahweh in the Kingdom age, contrasted with Gentile nations still in process of coming to faith

N. Jeremiah 31:31–34 — The New Covenant and Millennial Israel

The New Covenant is the spiritual foundation of the Millennial Kingdom for Israel. It is the covenant whose full national application transforms Israel from a nation that knew the Law externally to a nation that lives it internally.^{27,65}

Jer 31:33–34 *“‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”’*”

- Internal law: the Law written on the heart, not stone tablets — the indwelling Spirit produces willing, joyful obedience (Ezek 36:27)
- Universal knowledge of God: “they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest” — no need for evangelism within the covenant community; knowing God is the universal experience
- Complete forgiveness: “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” — the Millennial community is founded on the once-for-all atoning work of Christ applied nationally to Israel at the Second Coming
- The writer of Hebrews (Heb 8:8–12; 10:16–17) confirms the Church’s participation in the New Covenant through Christ, but the full national application to “the house of Israel and the house of Judah” awaits the Second Coming

X. THE FINAL REBELLION AND THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

After 1,000 years of the most perfect governmental, environmental, and spiritual conditions earth has ever seen, Satan is released and immediately orchestrates a massive final rebellion. This event exposes the depth of human depravity and vindicates God's judgment.^{22,15}

A. Satan Released — Rev 20:7–9

- “When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison” (Rev 20:7)
- He immediately goes out to “deceive the nations” in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog (a symbolic reference to the nations in rebellion, distinct from Ezek 38–39)

i Ezekiel 38–39 describes a separate invasion of Israel by a Gog-led coalition from the north, destroyed by direct divine intervention — earthquake, hail, fire, and plague. Dispensational writers differ on exactly when this happens (before the Tribulation, at its start, or at its midpoint) but agree it precedes the Millennium and is a historically distinct event from Rev 20:7–9. John's reuse of the name a thousand years later is typological, not historical: “Gog and Magog” becomes shorthand for any climactic, God-orchestrated destruction of the nations surrounding Israel — not a claim that the two battles are the same event.^{105,44}

- He gathers a vast multitude “like the sand of the seashore” — Millennium-born populations who never personally trusted Christ
- They surround “the camp of the saints and the beloved city” (Jerusalem)
- Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them — instantaneous, total defeat (Rev 20:9)
- Satan himself is thrown into the lake of fire, joining the beast and false prophet already there (Rev 20:10) — see Section VIII.F, “Judgment of Fallen Angels and Satan,” above for the full treatment, including its significance as the clearest proof text against annihilationism (conscious torment continuing, unbroken, after a thousand years).¹⁵

B. The Theological Significance of the Final Rebellion

The release of Satan and the eruption of rebellion proves several critical truths:²²

- Human nature is constitutionally sinful, not environmentally corrupted — even under perfect conditions, the unregenerate heart rebels
- Satan's temporary freedom demonstrates that he is a creature under God's absolute sovereignty, not an independent force — he is released only when God permits, and destroyed the moment God acts
- This vindicates God's eternal condemnation of sinners as just: even given every advantage, fallen humanity chooses rebellion
- The necessity of regeneration is confirmed: only those born again can inherit the eternal Kingdom (John 3:5–6)

C. The Great White Throne Judgment — Rev 20:11–15

[See Section VIII.G for the full treatment of this judgment.]

- The present heavens and earth “fled away” — the dissolution of the present creation
- All unsaved of all ages resurrected and judged according to their deeds
- Death and Hades cast into the Lake of Fire — the second death
- All whose names are not found in the Book of Life cast into the Lake of Fire

D. The Old Testament and New Testament Foundation for the Final Judgment

The Great White Throne is not a New Testament invention grafted onto an otherwise silent Old Testament. The premise that God is the righteous Judge of all the earth, and the certainty that every deed will be weighed, are asserted from Genesis onward — the New Testament describes the event; the Old Testament establishes the doctrine on which it rests.^{15,38}

Gen 18:25 *"Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"*

Abraham's question is not rhetorical doubt but the settled premise on which every subsequent judgment text depends: God's judging is not arbitrary but flows from His own righteous character. Every OT and NT judgment passage — including the Great White Throne — is an outworking of this single axiom.

- Ps 9:7–8; 96:13 — "He has established His throne for judgment... He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity." The recurring OT confession that history terminates in a comprehensive divine reckoning, not an indefinite drift.
- Eccl 12:14 — "God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." The OT's own doctrine of exhaustive, hidden-thing judgment — precisely what Rev 20:12's "books were opened" enacts.
- Dan 12:2 — already the source text for the two-resurrection structure (Section VII.A–B); it supplies the OT terminus of the wicked's resurrection itself: "some to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."
- Isa 66:24 — the closing image of Isaiah: "their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched." Quoted by Jesus in Mark 9:48 concerning the unrepentant; the OT source for the unending nature of Lake of Fire punishment.
- Mal 4:1 — the coming day "burning like a furnace," when the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble — Day-of-the-LORD judgment vocabulary that undergirds the fire that "came down from heaven and devoured them" in Rev 20:9.

The New Testament writers preach the certainty of this judgment as an extension of that OT doctrine, not as new revelation:

- Heb 9:27 — "it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment" — the universal principle behind the resurrection-then-judgment sequence of Rev 20:12–13.
- Acts 17:31 — Paul at the Areopagus: God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed." Paul's apostolic preaching to Gentiles assumes the very Judge-of-all-the-earth theology of Gen 18:25 and Ps 9.
- Rom 2:5–6, 16 — "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds... when God will judge the secrets of men."
- John 5:28–29 — already the source text cited for the "second resurrection" (Section VII.B); the Lord's own words anchor the resurrection-into-judgment sequence that Rev 20:11–15 enacts in vision.
- 2 Pet 3:7 — the present heavens and earth are "reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" — ties the Great White Throne directly to the dissolution of creation treated in Section XI.A below.

i *Pentecost (Things to Come, ch. XXXII, "The Preparation for the Eternal Kingdom") treats the Great White Throne as the hinge event between the Millennial and eternal kingdoms — the final act by which the "last enemy," death, is abolished (1 Cor 15:26; cf. Section XI.E below). Ryrie Study Bible notes on Rev 20:11–15 tie "books were opened" directly to the Eccl 12:14 doctrine that every act, hidden or not, is subject to judgment, and observe that no believer's name is at risk — only the unsaved of all ages stand at this throne. Walvoord (The Revelation of Jesus Christ) reads Rev 20:11–15 as the final proof that the Judge of Gen 18:25 and the Judge of Acts 17:31 are one and the same — history's single, unbroken doctrine of divine judgment reaching its last enactment.*

XI. THE ETERNAL STATE — THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS

After the Great White Throne Judgment, the present creation is dissolved and God creates all things new. The eternal state is not the end of history but its glorious consummation — the beginning of an unending age of perfect communion between God and the redeemed.^{13,40}

A. The Dissolution of the Present Creation (2 Pet 3:10–13)

The present heavens and earth are not merely renovated but fundamentally dissolved and recreated. Peter's language is vivid and physical.⁴⁰

2 Pet 3:10 *"The day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be discovered."*

- The Greek *stoicheia* (elements) may refer to the basic building blocks of physical matter — the creation dissolves at the atomic level
- This is not annihilation but transformation: "we are looking for new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet 3:13) implies continuity of purpose if not of substance
- The purpose: to remove every trace of the curse, sin, and death from existence

B. The New Creation (Rev 21:1; Isa 65:17; 66:22)

- "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea" (Rev 21:1)¹³
- The absence of the sea: in Scripture the sea symbolizes chaos, separation, and the restless wickedness of humanity (Isa 57:20; Rev 17:15) — it has no place in the new creation
- Isaiah 65:17: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind"
- The new creation is not simply a restored Eden but a transcendently glorious state beyond anything in pre-Fall history

C. The New Jerusalem — The Eternal Dwelling Place of God and the Redeemed

The New Jerusalem is the central feature of the eternal state — a literal city of unimaginable scale and splendor that descends from heaven as God's dwelling among His people.¹³

- It descends from heaven as "a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2) — both a city and a community of the redeemed
- Dimensions: 12,000 stadia (approximately 1,400–1,500 miles) in length, width, and height — whether cubic or pyramidal, the scale exceeds anything in human experience (Rev 21:16)
- The wall: 144 cubits high, jasper; the foundations adorned with every precious stone; the 12 gates are 12 single pearls (Rev 21:17–21)
- No temple: "The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Rev 21:22) — the entire city is the holy of holies
- No sun or moon needed: the glory of God illumines it and the Lamb is its lamp (Rev 21:23–24)
- The river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev 22:1)
- The tree of life — absent since Eden (Gen 3:24) — grows on both sides of the river, bearing fruit every month, its leaves for the healing of the nations (Rev 22:2)
- The nations walk in the light of the city; kings bring their glory into it (Rev 21:24–26) — the redeemed of all ages in their ethnic and national identity continue to bring glory to God

D. The Final Conditions — The Consummation of All Things

Revelation 21:3–5 and 22:3–5 present the glorious final conditions of the eternal state — the world God always intended and that His redemptive program achieves.¹³

- God Himself dwells with His people: “The tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them” (Rev 21:3)
- No more death, mourning, crying, or pain: “the first things have passed away” (Rev 21:4)
- No more curse: the Adamic curse (Gen 3:16–19) is entirely and permanently removed (Rev 22:3)
- No more night, no need for lamps or sun: the Lord God gives them light (Rev 22:5)
- “They will see His face” (Rev 22:4) — the beatific vision; direct, unmediated communion with God, which no fallen creature has experienced since Eden
- His name on their foreheads: complete, permanent identification with and belonging to God
- “They will reign forever and ever” (Rev 22:5) — the redeemed exercise dominion in the eternal state, fulfilling the original mandate of Gen 1:28, now perfectly and permanently

► *The eternal state is not static bliss but dynamic, purposeful existence in perfect fellowship with the Triune God — a beginning, not an end. It is the commencement of unending life in the fullness of everything God designed humanity to be and to enjoy.*

E. The Transition from the Millennial Kingdom to the Eternal State — 1 Corinthians 15:24–28

Scripture does not leave the hand-off between the Millennial Kingdom (Section IX) and the eternal state described above merely implicit. Paul supplies the explicit theological hinge in 1 Corinthians 15:24–28, describing the moment at which Christ's mediatorial Kingdom reign concludes and gives way to the undivided reign of the Triune God, forever.^{4,37}

1 Cor 15:24–26, 28 *“then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death... When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”*

- The sequence: (1) the Millennial reign of Section IX, in which Christ rules until “all His enemies” are subdued — culminating in the defeat of the final rebellion (Section X.A); (2) the abolition of death itself, the “last enemy,” at the Great White Throne, when Death and Hades are cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14; Section X.C, X.D above); (3) the Son's mediatorial kingdom handed over to the Father, so that God is “all in all.”
- This does not diminish Christ's eternal deity or His eternal reign — “He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:33). Dispensational writers, including Pentecost and Walvoord, read Paul as describing not the cessation of Christ's kingship but the completion of His mediatorial, redemptive Kingdom program — after which the Father and the Son reign together without further distinction, sharing a single throne (Rev 22:3, “the throne of God and of the Lamb”).
- Pentecost (Things to Come, ch. XXXII, “The Preparation for the Eternal Kingdom”) identifies this text as the hinge between the Millennial and eternal kingdoms: the Millennium is itself the last phase of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, through which He subdues the last enemies before the eternal state begins.¹

F. The Old Testament Roots of the New Creation — From Eden to the New Jerusalem

The New Jerusalem is not a New Testament novelty attached to an otherwise unrelated Old Testament storyline; it is the deliberate reversal and fulfillment of Genesis 1–3. Scripture's plot begins in a garden with God's presence, a tree of life, and a river, and a barrier raised by sin — and ends in a city with God's presence, a tree of life, and a river, with the barrier permanently removed.^{13,40}

- Gen 2:9–10 — the tree of life and the river flowing out of Eden — the primeval pattern that Rev 22:1–2 restates: the river of the water of life, and the tree of life bearing fruit every month.
- Gen 3:22–24 — after the Fall, cherubim and a flaming sword bar the way back to the tree of life — the one barrier that eternity removes: “its gates will never be closed” (Rev 21:25); access to “the tree of life” is restored (Rev 22:14).
- Isa 25:8 — “He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces.” The direct OT source text behind Rev 21:4: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes... there will no longer be any death.”
- Isa 60:19–20 — “you will no longer have the sun for light by day... the LORD will be your everlasting light.” The OT source for Rev 21:23 and 22:5 — no need of sun or moon.
- Exod 25:8; Lev 26:11–12 — “let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them”... “I will make My dwelling among you... I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.” The tabernacle/covenant formula that Rev 21:3 restates almost verbatim: “the tabernacle of God is among men... they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.”
- Dan 12:3 — the redeemed “will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse... like the stars forever and ever” — pairs with Rev 22:5: “they will reign forever and ever.”
- Heb 11:10, 16; 12:22 — the writer of Hebrews already anticipates this city in NT terms before Revelation describes it: Abraham “was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God,” and believers “have come... to the heavenly Jerusalem.”

i *Pentecost (Things to Come, ch. XXXIII, “The Heavenly City New Jerusalem”) reads the New Jerusalem as the final term of a single OT-to-NT trajectory running from Eden’s garden through the tabernacle, the temple, and Ezekiel’s river (Ezek 47:1–12), to its consummation in Rev 21–22. Ryrie Study Bible notes on Revelation 21–22 identify the closing vision as the final fulfillment of the tabernacling promise first given in Exodus 25:8 and repeated throughout the prophets (e.g., Ezek 37:27, “My dwelling place also will be with them”). Walvoord (The Millennial Kingdom) and Pentecost both treat the Eden-to-New-Jerusalem inclusio as decisive evidence against any reading of the eternal state as a merely spiritual or non-physical hope: what sin corrupted in a garden, God restores — and exceeds — in a city.*

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” — Revelation 22:20 (NASB 2020)

APPENDIX A — INSTITUTIONAL & ONLINE REFERENCE SOURCES

The following institutions, journals, and online portals represent the dispensational and Free Grace theological tradition from which this study draws. All are freely accessible and provide reliable, DTS-aligned resources for further study. They are cited throughout this document and form the standing reference library for this series.^{48,49}

A. Dallas Theological Seminary — Affiliated Resources

Bible.org (Biblical Studies Foundation)

Bible.org is the online ministry of Biblical Studies Press, closely associated with Dallas Theological Seminary faculty. It hosts the NET Bible, Thomas Constable's full-Bible expository notes (updated annually), thousands of scholarly articles, and Greek/Hebrew study tools.^{48,47}

- URL: <https://bible.org>
- Thomas Constable's Expository Notes: free, full-Bible, verse-by-verse commentary by a retired DTS professor. Updated annually. Available as individual book PDFs at <https://planbiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/47>
- NET Bible (New English Translation): produced by DTS-affiliated scholars with over 60,000 translator's notes. Available free at netbible.org⁵⁵
- DTS faculty articles: thousands of sermons, studies, and topical articles by DTS-trained scholars on every major biblical and theological topic

Insight for Living (Chuck Swindoll)

Charles Swindoll is chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary and host of Insight for Living. His full sermon archive, study guides, and commentary series (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, Tyndale House) reflect the DTS dispensational tradition in pastoral form.^{52,57}

- URL: <https://insight.org/resources>
- Swindoll's Living Insights NT Commentary series covers all 27 NT books (16 vols., Tyndale House, 2010–2022)⁵⁸
- The Swindoll Study Bible (NLT, Tyndale House, 2017) includes his notes and devotionals throughout

The Urban Alternative (Tony Evans)

Tony Evans is senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship and the first African American to earn a ThD from Dallas Theological Seminary. His Kingdom Agenda framework applies DTS dispensational-grace theology to all of life.^{53,59}

- URL: <https://tonyevans.org/resources>
- The Tony Evans Bible Commentary (B&H, 2019): full-Bible, one-volume commentary in the Kingdom Agenda framework⁵⁹
- NASB Tony Evans Study Bible (Tyndale, 2019) with Kingdom Agenda notes throughout

Moody Bible Institute Resources

Moody Bible Institute shares significant theological overlap with the DTS tradition — shared faculty (Dr. John F. Hart), shared publishers (Moody Publishers), and a shared commitment to inerrancy, dispensational premillennialism, and grace-centered soteriology.⁶⁰

- The Moody Bible Commentary (Moody Publishers, 2014): full-Bible, one-volume commentary by MBI faculty⁶⁰
- Moody Publishers: publishes Jensen (inductive Bible study), Ryrie (Basic Theology, Dispensationalism), Hendricks (Living by the Book), and Swindoll (Grace Awakening)
- Moody Radio: <https://www.moodyradio.org> — Bible teaching from MBI faculty

B. Free Grace & GES Resources

Faithalone.org (Grace Evangelical Society)

Faithalone.org is the primary digital hub of the Grace Evangelical Society, founded by Zane C. Hodges. It hosts the full archive of the Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society (JOTGES), GES blog posts, free eBooks, and Greek word studies. All resources are Free Grace / DTS-aligned on soteriology.^{49,56}

- URL: <https://www.faithalone.org>
- JOTGES back issues: freely available at [faithalone.org/journal](https://www.faithalone.org/journal) — peer-reviewed, semiannual, covering soteriology, assurance, Greek exegesis, and eschatology⁵⁶
- The Grace New Testament Commentary (2 vols., GES, 2010): the only full NT commentary written entirely from a Free Grace perspective; fourteen GES scholars⁶¹
- Hodges, Zane C. *Absolutely Free: A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (Zondervan, 1989): the flagship Free Grace apologetic text⁶²

Free Grace Alliance (Freegracealliance.com)

The Free Grace Alliance represents a broader coalition than GES, including FGA-affiliated pastors, churches, and schools. Charles Bing (Executive Director) authors GraceNotes, over 100 brief exegetical and theological articles.⁵⁰

- URL: <https://www.freegracealliance.com>
- GraceNotes by Charles C. Bing: over 100 issues covering assurance, repentance, and Free Grace hermeneutics, freely available at the FGA website

Sellers Bible Institute (Sellersbibleinstitute.com)

Sellers Bible Institute operates in the Free Grace dispensational tradition of C.I. Scofield. Course materials and doctrinal studies are particularly useful for curriculum development in the lay-level theological training context.⁵¹

- URL: <https://www.sellersbibleinstitute.com>

C. Greek & Hebrew Study Tools (DTS-Compatible)

Blue Letter Bible (Blueletterbible.org)

Blue Letter Bible provides free access to multiple Bible translations, Strong's concordance with Greek and Hebrew lexicons, interlinear text, and commentaries by Thomas Constable, David Guzik, Matthew Henry, and others. It is the most accessible lay-level digital tool compatible with the DTS tradition.⁵⁴

- URL: <https://www.blueletterbible.org>
- Greek lexicon: Thayer's Greek Lexicon integrated with Strong's numbers
- Hebrew lexicon: Brown-Driver-Briggs (BDB) integrated with Strong's numbers
- Interlinear text: word-by-word Greek/Hebrew with English gloss
- Commentaries: Constable, Guzik, and others — free, searchable

i For academic footnotes, verify BLB lexicon entries against the standard scholarly tools: BDAG (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, 3rd ed., University of Chicago Press, 2000) for Greek, and HALOT (*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*, Brill, 2001) for Hebrew.

D. Standard Academic Reference Sources

- Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament and Old Testament*. 2 vols. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983, 1985. The flagship DTS faculty commentary on the entire Bible.³
- Constable, Thomas L. *Expository Notes on the Bible* (full Bible). Plano Bible Chapel, 2023. Free PDF download by book at planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/⁴⁷
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*. Zondervan, 1958. The definitive DTS systematic eschatology text.¹
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology*. Rev. ed. Moody Publishers, 1999. The standard DTS systematic theology.⁴

- Ryrie, Charles C. Dispensationalism. Rev. ed. Moody Publishers, 1995. The definitive popular defense of dispensational theology.⁵
- Ryrie, Charles C. The Ryrie Study Bible. Moody Publishers, 1978. Study Bible notes anchored in the DTS tradition, cited throughout this document by passage.⁷
- Anderson, Robert. The Coming Prince. Kregel, 1975 (orig. 1894). Classic calculation of Daniel's 69 weeks to the Triumphal Entry.¹⁶
- Hoehner, Harold W. Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ. Zondervan, 1977. The most rigorous astronomical calculation of the 69 weeks.¹⁷
- Walvoord, John F. Israel in Prophecy. Zondervan, 1962. Essential treatment of Israel's covenants and prophetic program.²⁸
- Walvoord, John F. The Millennial Kingdom. Zondervan, 1959. Full systematic treatment of the Millennium from OT and NT texts.⁶⁷
- Walvoord, John F. The Rapture Question. Rev. ed. Zondervan, 1979. Standard defense of pretribulational Rapture.³¹
- Walvoord, John F. The Revelation of Jesus Christ. Moody Publishers, 1966. Verse-by-verse commentary on Revelation from a DTS perspective.³⁴

APPENDIX B — THE ABRAHAMIC LAND GRANT: BORDERS, HISTORY & MILLENNIAL FULFILLMENT

The land promise given to Abraham in Genesis 15:18–21 is one of the most specific and consequential commitments in all of Scripture. It has never been fully possessed by Israel at any point in history. Its complete fulfillment awaits the Millennial Kingdom, when Israel will be restored to every square mile of the covenant territory.^{27,65,63}

A. The Two-Layer Framework: Covenant Grant and Tribal Allotment Grid

Understanding the Abrahamic land boundaries requires distinguishing two simultaneous but different layers of territorial description that operate throughout the OT. Failure to distinguish them produces the apparent contradictions that have led some to identify the southern boundary as the Wadi el-Arish when the covenant grant clearly reaches the Nile. Pentecost addresses this directly in *Things to Come* (pp. 89–90), and his framework provides the key.^{63,103,65}

Pentecost's Framework (*Things to Come*, pp. 89–90) — Summarized

The land from the Nile to the Euphrates is the full extent of what God granted Abraham. Within that larger grant, the tribal allotments define how specific portions are assigned. The tribes do not occupy the full extent of the grant simultaneously in one administrative grid — the grant is Israel's national sovereign domain, while the tribal structure organizes the central settled territory. The two documents (Gen 15:18 and Num 34 / Ezek 47–48) are not competing descriptions of the same boundary. They are complementary descriptions of two different levels of the same territorial promise.

*Note: This is a summary of Pentecost's position as presented in *Things to Come*, pp. 65–90, not a verbatim quotation. See endnote for full citation.*

Layer 1: The Full Covenant Grant (Gen 15:18) — The Outer National Claim

Genesis 15:18 defines the outer sovereign limit of what God promised Abraham's descendants. It is stated in terms of the two greatest rivers of the ancient Near East — the Nile and the Euphrates — forming a grand quadrilateral that encompasses the entire Fertile Crescent from northeast Africa to Mesopotamia. This is the national domain: the full extent of what belongs to Israel by divine covenant.^{63,103,65}

- Southern anchor: the Nile River (Hebrew nahar Mitzraim; LXX potamos — major perennial river). Pentecost (pp. 89–90), Walvoord (Israel in Prophecy, p. 53), and Ryrie (Study Bible note on Gen 15:18) identify this as the Nile.^{63,103,65}
- Eastern anchor: the Euphrates River (nahar perat) in its full extent from the Syrian border south through Iraq to the Persian Gulf (approx. 1,740 miles). Encompasses all of modern Jordan, Syria west of the Euphrates, and the western bank of the Euphrates through Iraq.
- Western boundary: the Mediterranean Sea ("the Great Sea") — from the Nile Delta coastline north to the entrance of Hamath.
- Northern boundary: the entrance of Hamath (Lebo-hamath) — the Orontes River valley in modern Lebanon and southern Syria.

Layer 2: The Tribal Allotment Grid (Num 34; Ezek 47–48) — The Inner Settlement Framework

Numbers 34 and Ezekiel 47–48 address a different question: not what belongs to Israel nationally, but how the central territory is distributed among the twelve tribes for settlement. This grid operates inside the outer covenant grant. Its boundaries are administrative, not sovereign.^{75,65,68}

- Southern administrative boundary: the nachal Mitzraim (Wadi el-Arish) — a different Hebrew word (nachal = seasonal wadi, brook), rendered by the LXX as cheimarros (seasonal torrent). The administrative SW edge of the tribal settlement zone. It does not define the covenant grant; it defines where the tribal grid ends on its southwestern side.
- Eastern administrative boundary: the Jordan River and the Dead Sea — the internal tribal division line between the nine and one-half western tribes (Num 34:10–12) and the two and one-half Transjordanian tribes (Num 32). Not the full covenant eastern boundary (which is the Euphrates).

- Western and northern boundaries: identical to the covenant grant — the Mediterranean Sea and Lebo-hamath. These two sides are the same at both levels.

The Key Linguistic Distinction: Nahar vs. Nachal

The apparent contradiction between Gen 15:18 (Nile) and Num 34:5 (Wadi el-Arish) dissolves when the Hebrew vocabulary is read carefully. These are not two scholars' competing identifications of the same boundary — they are two different words describing two different things at two different levels.^{63,26}

- nahar (נהר): a major, perennial, navigable river. Used in Gen 15:18 for both the “river of Egypt” and the Euphrates. The LXX renders nahar as potamos — the standard Greek term for a great river, used for the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Jordan in flood. Potamos is never used for a seasonal watercourse.
- nachal (נחל): a seasonal wadi, brook, or streambed. Used in Num 34:5 for the “brook of Egypt.” The LXX renders nachal as cheimarros — a rain-swollen torrent or dry streambed. These two Greek words are never interchangeable in the LXX.
- Pentecost's conclusion: The distinction between nahar (Gen 15:18) and nachal (Num 34:5) is the Hebrew writer's deliberate choice of two different words for two different things. English translations that render both as “river of Egypt” obscure this distinction and are the primary source of the apparent contradiction.⁶³

i *Minority view — Wadi el-Arish throughout: Some scholars argue that nahar and nachal are used interchangeably in certain contexts, making Gen 15:18 refer to the same Wadi el-Arish as Num 34:5. This view reduces the covenant grant to approximately 30,000 sq. miles. Pentecost, Walvoord, and Ryrie all reject this on linguistic and contextual grounds: the symmetry of the two great rivers (Nile and Euphrates) as outer limits is both linguistically supported by the nahar/potamos vocabulary and contextually appropriate for the magnitude of an unconditional divine promise.*

The Sovereignty Zone: Territory Within the Grant but Outside the Tribal Grid

Pentecost's two-layer framework requires acknowledging a third category: territory that belongs to Israel by covenant grant but is not subdivided among the twelve tribes in the tribal allotment grid. This is the sovereignty zone.^{63,68}

- The Sinai Peninsula — the territory between the Wadi el-Arish (nachal, the tribal grid SW edge) and the Nile (nahar, the grant SW boundary). Within the grant, outside the tribal grid. Under Israel's Millennial sovereign dominion.
- Transjordan east of Jordan — between the Jordan River (tribal grid eastern edge) and the Euphrates (grant eastern boundary). Partially allotted to the 2½ tribes (Num 32); the remainder is sovereignty zone.
- Syria and NW Iraq — the territory west of the Euphrates in modern Syria and Iraq that falls within the grant eastern boundary but has no tribal allotment.
- Isaiah 19:23–25 confirms this framework: in the Millennial age, Egypt and Assyria are not absorbed into Israel's tribal territory but are subordinate to Israel's Messianic governance — exactly what the sovereignty zone model predicts.

B. The Boundary Matrix: Both Layers Displayed

The following matrix shows every boundary of the covenant land at both the grant level and the tribal allotment grid level, with the Hebrew and Greek vocabulary that distinguishes them. Green = covenant grant boundary. Blue = tribal allotment grid boundary. Gold = boundary identical at both levels.^{63,103,65}

Boundary	Layer	Hebrew / LXX Term	Full Covenant Grant (Gen 15:18 — outer national claim)	Tribal Allotment Grid (Num 34; Ezek 47–48 — inner settlement boundary)	Key References
SOUTHERN	Grant ★ View followed here	nahar Mitzraim (Heb.) / potamos (LXX) major perennial river	The NILE RIVER — great river of Egypt from the Nile Delta NE through Sinai. Outer sovereign boundary. Encompasses Sinai Peninsula and NE Egypt under Israel's Millennial dominion. Pentecost pp. 89–90; Walvoord p. 53; Ryrie note on Gen 15:18.	N/A — the Nile is the outer grant boundary only. It does not appear in Num 34 or Ezek 47. Territory between the Nile and the Wadi el-Arish lies within the grant but outside the tribal grid (sovereignty zone). Cf. Isa 19:23–25.	Gen 15:18 Isa 27:12 Isa 19:23–25
	Tribal Grid (alt. view)	nachal Mitzraim (Heb.) / cheimarros (LXX) seasonal wadi / brook	N/A — the Wadi el-Arish is the tribal grid SW boundary, not the outer covenant grant. A different Hebrew word (nachal ≠ nahar) describing a different boundary at a different level.	Wadi el-Arish — NE Sinai seasonal streambed; SW edge of the tribal settlement zone. Used for dividing the land among the twelve tribes inside the national territory.	Num 34:5 Josh 15:4 Ezek 47:19
NORTHERN	Grant & Grid (same)	L'vo Chamat Entrance of Hamath	Lebo-hamath — the Orontes River valley in modern Lebanon/Syria. Northern limit of the full covenant grant.	Northern tribal allotment boundary (Num 34:7–9; Ezek 47:15–17) follows the same line. Both layers converge at Lebo-hamath. The northern boundary is identical at grant and tribal grid levels.	Num 34:7–9 1 Kgs 8:65 Ezek 47:15–17
EASTERN	Grant	nahar perat "the great river, the Euphrates"	The EUPHRATES RIVER in full — from the Syrian border south through Iraq to the Persian Gulf (approx. 1,740 miles total). Encompasses modern Jordan, Syria west of the Euphrates, and the western bank of the Euphrates through all of Iraq to its end.	N/A — the Euphrates is not the tribal allotment eastern boundary. The Jordan River is the internal tribal division (Num 34:10–12). The 2½ tribes' Transjordanian land (Num 32) lies between the Jordan and the Euphrates — within the grant but outside the tribal grid.	Gen 15:18 Deut 1:7; 11:24 1 Kgs 4:21
	Tribal Grid	Jordan River (internal east boundary)	N/A — the Jordan is not the covenant eastern boundary. It is the internal line dividing the 9½ western tribes from the 2½ Transjordanian tribes.	Jordan River → Sea of Chinnereth → Dead Sea. The formal tribal grid eastern edge (Num 34:10–12) for the nine and one-half western tribes. The 2½ Transjordanian tribes (Num 32) are inside the grant but outside this grid.	Num 34:10–12 Num 32 Ezek 47:18
WESTERN	Grant & Grid (same)	hayam hagadol "the Great Sea" (Mediterranean)	The MEDITERRANEAN SEA — full Levantine coastline from the Nile Delta north to the entrance of Hamath. Western limit of the full covenant grant.	The Mediterranean coast is also the tribal grid western boundary (Num 34:6; Ezek 47:20). Both layers share this border without distinction. Note: the narrow Sinai coastal strip between the nachal and the Nile is within the grant (sovereignty zone) but outside the tribal grid.	Num 34:6 Ezek 47:20 Gen 15:18
SOVEREIGNTY ZONE (grant only; no tribal grid)	Grant only	Within nahar boundaries; outside nachal / Jordan grid	Territory belonging to Israel by covenant grant but not assigned to any tribe in Num 34 or Ezek 47–48: (1) Sinai Peninsula between Nile and Wadi el-Arish; (2) Transjordan east of Jordan, west of Euphrates (beyond the 2½ tribes' allotment); (3) SW Syria and NW Iraq west of the Euphrates.	No tribal assignments in Num 34 or Ezek 47–48. Governed from Jerusalem under Messianic rule without tribal subdivision. Isa 19:23–25: Egypt and Assyria subordinate to Israel in the Millennium — within the sovereignty zone, not the tribal grid. Pentecost: the covenant grant defines the national domain; the tribal	Gen 15:18 Isa 19:23–25 Isa 27:12 Pentecost pp. 89–90

				allotments organize the central settled territory.	
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C. The Euphrates in Full: How Far East Does the Grant Run?

The eastern boundary is the Euphrates in its complete length — not merely its upper reaches in Syria, but the entire river from the Syrian border to its mouth at the Persian Gulf near Basra in southern Iraq.^{63,103}

- The Euphrates flows approximately 1,740 miles from eastern Turkey southeast through Syria and Iraq, emptying into the Persian Gulf near modern Basra. The full river is the boundary.
- Gen 15:18 calls it nahar haperat — the great river, the Euphrates — using gadol (great) as its standard OT epithet, referring to the entire geographic feature.
- Deut 1:7; 11:24 repeat “the Euphrates” as the eastern limit without any qualification or truncation.
- 1 Kgs 4:21: Solomon’s dominion reached “from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt” — matching the same two outer endpoints as Gen 15:18, confirming both rivers as full boundary markers for the national domain.
- Modern implication: the eastern grant boundary runs through modern Syria and the full length of modern Iraq. This entire territory west of the Euphrates, including NW Iraq, falls within the Abrahamic covenant claim. It has never been possessed by Israel. It awaits Millennial fulfillment.

► *The covenant territory from Nile to Euphrates encompasses approximately 300,000–350,000 square miles — roughly ten to fifteen times the area of the modern State of Israel (approx. 8,500 sq. miles). Solomon approached the eastern boundary through tributary relationships (1 Kgs 4:21) but never exercised full sovereign possession. The Millennial Kingdom is the only period in which every square mile will be literally satisfied.*

D. The Tribal Allotment Boundaries: Numbers 34 and Ezekiel 47–48

Numbers 34 gives the tribal allotment boundary for the land west of Jordan. Ezekiel 47:13–48:35 gives the Millennial re-allotment. Both use the nachal (Wadi el-Arish) as the administrative SW boundary of the tribal grid — consistent with the two-layer framework and not in conflict with the Nile as the outer grant boundary.^{75,65,68}

Num 34:3–5 *“Your southern side shall be from the Wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern border shall extend from the end of the Salt Sea eastward... and the border shall turn to Azmon and proceed to the brook of Egypt (nachal Mitzraim), and the border shall end at the sea.”*

- Southern tribal grid boundary: Salt Sea → Ascent of Akrabbim → Zin → Kadesh-barnea → Hazar-addar → Azmon → nachal Mitzraim (Wadi el-Arish) → Mediterranean. The nachal marks the administrative SW edge of the tribal settlement zone, distinct from the nahar (Nile) outer grant boundary.⁷⁵
- Western tribal grid boundary: the Mediterranean Sea — same as the grant western boundary; both layers share this border
- Northern tribal grid boundary: Great Sea → Mount Hor → Lebo-hamath → Zedad → Ziphron → Hazar-enan — same general line as the grant northern boundary; both layers share this border
- Eastern tribal grid boundary: Hazar-enan → Shepham → Riblah → Sea of Chinnereth → Jordan River → Dead Sea. The Jordan is the internal tribal division line, not the outer grant eastern boundary (the Euphrates).

i *The 2½ Transjordanian tribes (Reuben, Gad, half of Manasseh) received their allotment east of the Jordan (Num 32), placing them within the covenant grant but outside the Num 34 tribal grid. Their territory lies in the sovereignty zone between the Jordan River and the Euphrates covenant boundary.*

The Millennial Re-Allotment: Ezekiel 47:13–48:35

Ezekiel 47–48 carries the tribal grid framework forward into the Millennial Kingdom, confirming that the nachal/Jordan administrative boundaries remain in use for tribal distribution while the full grant (Nile to Euphrates) governs the national domain.^{65,68}

Ezek 47:13–14 *“This shall be the boundary by which you shall divide the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel; Joseph shall have two portions...”*

- Northern boundary (Ezek 47:15–17): Great Sea → Hethlon → Lebo-hamath → Zedad → Berothah → Hazer-hatticon near Hauran — modern Lebanon/Syria border zone

- Eastern boundary (Ezek 47:18): Hauran, Damascus, Gilead, Jordan River to the Dead Sea — Jordan River as internal tribal division line, consistent with Num 34
- Southern boundary (Ezek 47:19): Tamar → Meribath-kadesh → nachal Mitzraim (Wadi el-Arish) → Mediterranean. The Millennial tribal grid uses the same nachal administrative boundary as Num 34. The territory between the nachal and the Nile (sovereignty zone) falls under Israel's Millennial dominion without tribal subdivision.^{68,65}
- Western boundary (Ezek 47:20): the Mediterranean Sea — identical at both layers
- Tribal portions (Ezek 48:1–29): seven tribes north of the sacred district (Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah); five south (Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad)
- The sacred district (Ezek 48:8–22): 25,000 cubits square — the Millennial Temple, priests, and Jerusalem — the geographic heart of the Kingdom
- City gates (Ezek 48:30–35): twelve gates named for the twelve tribes; city name: “THE LORD IS THERE” (Yahweh Shammah)

E. Has Israel Ever Possessed All of This Land?

The answer of Scripture and history is no. No period in Israel's history has seen the full possession of every square mile of the Abrahamic grant. This confirms the covenant awaits a future literal fulfillment.^{64,63}

- Period of Joshua (1406–1370 BC): Major Canaanite territory conquered west of Jordan, but large portions remained (Josh 13:1–7; Judg 1:19–36). The full grant boundary was never approached.
- Period of David and Solomon (1010–930 BC): The closest approach. Solomon's dominion reached “from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt” (1 Kgs 4:21) — as tribute, not full sovereign possession. The Nile boundary was never reached.
- Period of the Divided Kingdom (930–722 BC): Declining control; Assyrian and Babylonian pressure steadily reduced Israelite-governed territory.
- Post-exilic period (538 BC–AD 70): Never approached the full grant. Israel was a province of Persia, Greece, and Rome successively.
- Modern State of Israel (1948–present): Approximately 8,500 sq. miles — roughly 2.5–3% of the full covenant grant.

► *The Palestinian (Land) Covenant of Deut 30 explicitly guarantees that even after dispersion to the ends of the earth, God will gather Israel and restore them to the full land (Deut 30:3–5). The covenant is unconditional: God's oath stands regardless of Israel's faithfulness. The Millennial Kingdom is the only period in all of history in which every dimension of the land grant — both the full covenant grant (Nile to Euphrates) and the tribal allotments within it — will be simultaneously and literally satisfied.*

APPENDIX E — SUMMARY OF TRIBULATION (RAPTURE TIMING) VIEWS

The following one-page summary presents the five major evangelical positions on the Rapture's timing relative to the Tribulation period. The pretribulation position is the view adopted throughout this document, consistent with the Dallas Theological Seminary tradition.

View	Church in Trib?	Timing of Rapture	Primary Proponents	Key Scriptural Basis & Assessment
Pretribulation (PreTrib) ★ Held here	No — removed before the 70th Week begins	Before the Tribulation; imminent, signless	Darby, Chafer, Walvoord, Pentecost, Ryrie, Swindoll; Dallas Theological Seminary tradition	Rev 3:10 (kept from the hour); 1 Thess 5:9 (not appointed to wrath); absence of “ekklesia” in Rev 4–18; imminent expectation throughout NT. Only view that preserves imminency.
Midtribulation (MidTrib)	Partial — through first 3½ years only	At the midpoint of the Tribulation (after 1,260 days)	Gleason Archer, Norman Harrison	Identifies the “last trumpet” of 1 Cor 15:52 with the seventh trumpet of Rev 11:15. Weakness: the first 3½ years include Seal judgments which are still divine wrath; the distinction between God's wrath and Antichrist's wrath is hard to sustain.
Pre-Wrath (PreWrath)	Partial — through most of Tribulation	At the cosmic disturbances of the sixth seal (late in the Tribulation)	Marvin Rosenthal, Robert Van Kampen	Distinguishes “great tribulation” (Satan's wrath) from “Day of the LORD” (God's wrath); Church is removed before God's wrath but not before Satan's persecution. Weakness: Rev 6:16–17 attributes even the Seal Judgments to the Lamb's wrath, not merely Satan's.
Posttribulation (PostTrib)	Yes — through the entire Tribulation	At the end of the Tribulation, simultaneous with the Second Coming	George Ladd, Robert Gundry, Doug Moo; most historic premillennialists	1 Thess 4:17 as a “meeting in the air” followed by immediate return. Weakness: destroys imminency; requires the Church to be present through all wrath; makes the Rapture and Second Coming the same event (contradicted by their very different descriptions); leaves no time for Bema Seat Judgment or Marriage Supper.
Partial Rapture	Partially — only watching/faithful believers raptured	Multiple points throughout the Tribulation	Robert Govett, G.H. Pember (minority)	Bases rapture on spiritual readiness rather than positional standing in Christ. Weakness: contradicts the unconditional nature of the believer's union with Christ; introduces merit into a grace-based event; no clear NT support.

► *The pretribulation view is the only position that fully preserves: (1) the doctrine of imminency — Christ can return at any moment with no preceding signs; (2) the exemption of the Church from divine wrath (1 Thess 5:9; Rom 5:9); (3) a coherent distinction between the Rapture and the Second Coming (two events, not one); and (4) the necessary interval for the Bema Seat Judgment and Marriage Supper of the Lamb before Christ returns with His saints.*

APPENDIX F — SUMMARY OF MILLENNIAL KINGDOM VIEWS

The following one-page summary presents the four major evangelical positions on the nature and timing of the Millennial Kingdom, plus a common informal position. The dispensational premillennial view is adopted throughout this document.

View	Nature of the Kingdom	Primary Proponents	Key Arguments & Weaknesses
Premillennialism (Dispensational) ★ Held here	A literal, physical, 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth after His Second Coming. Israel restored to her covenant land; Davidic throne established literally in Jerusalem.	Darby, Scofield, Chafer, Walvoord, Pentecost, Ryrie, DTS tradition; Swindoll, Evans	For: consistent literal hermeneutic; only view that allows OT covenant promises to be fulfilled to ethnic Israel as made; six-fold use of 1,000 years in Rev 20; OT Kingdom passages (Isa 2; 11; Mic 4; Zech 14; Ezek 40–48) cannot be satisfactorily fulfilled in the present age or heaven. Weakness: requires the complexity of two groups of inhabitants (glorified + mortal) in the Kingdom.
Premillennialism (Historic / Non-Disp.)	A literal future 1,000-year earthly reign, but the Church (not ethnic Israel) inherits the OT Kingdom promises. No sharp Israel-Church distinction.	Ladd, Blomberg, Schreiner; many evangelical Baptists	For: takes Rev 20:1–7 literally; affirms a future earthly reign. Weakness: does not maintain the Israel-Church distinction; forces OT covenants to be transferred to the Church; cannot explain who populates the Kingdom or how the unconditional land covenants are fulfilled.
Amillennialism	No literal future Millennium. The “thousand years” of Rev 20 is symbolic of the entire Church Age; Christ reigns spiritually now through the Church. The Millennium = the present age.	Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Berkhof, Hoekema; most Reformed and mainline denominations	For: avoids the complexity of a two-stage second coming; treats Rev 20 as symbolic (consistent with other Revelation imagery). Weakness: Satan is manifestly not bound (1 Pet 5:8); believers are not currently reigning as Rev 20:4 describes; OT Kingdom conditions (Isa 11:6–9; Zech 14; Ezek 47) are not present. Requires allegorizing hundreds of specific OT prophecies.
Postmillennialism	The Church's gospel proclamation progressively Christianizes the world, bringing in a golden age of peace before Christ returns to a converted world at the end of history. No literal Millennium.	Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield (historical); Gary DeMar, R.J. Rushdoony (theonomy)	For: emphasizes the transformative power of the Gospel and the Great Commission. Weakness: contradicts NT descriptions of increasing apostasy before Christ's return (2 Tim 3:1–5; 2 Thess 2:3); world history provides no evidence of Christianization approaching the conditions of Isa 2 or Zech 14; collapsed during the world wars of the 20th century among its own proponents.
Panmillennialism (Popular / Informal)	No systematic view; “it will all pan out in the end.” Avoidance of prophetic specificity.	Common informal position among lay Christians and some pastors	Not a scholarly position but a pastoral reality. While charitable, it forfeits the confidence and urgency that specific prophetic knowledge provides. All views agree Christ returns; they disagree on the when, how, and nature of the Kingdom.

i *The hermeneutical test: Walvoord states it plainly — “The premillennial interpretation is the only view that allows for a literal fulfillment of the numerous OT prophecies concerning Israel and the kingdom.” The volume and specificity of OT Kingdom material (Ezekiel's nine chapters of Temple architecture; Zechariah 14's specific topographic changes; Isaiah 65's reference to death at age 100 as dying young) makes allegorical treatment not a conservative but a radical departure from the plain sense of Scripture.*

APPENDIX G — THE KINGDOM PROMISED: OT REFERENCE SUPPLEMENT

This appendix compiles the Kingdom Reference Supplement — a systematic survey of Old Testament kingdom prophecy, organized by count, book, theme, and passage index. It is designed for use alongside the main prophetic program outline and the separate Kingdom Reference Supplement document.

G.1 The Count: How Many OT Kingdom References?

The question of how many OT references relate to the promised Kingdom admits no single precise answer, because what is being counted matters enormously. The 1,845 figure (Payne) is the most rigorous scholarly count covering the broadest legitimate category.^{86,1,88}

Counting Method	Figure	Source & Notes
OT references to the Second Coming / Messianic era (all forms)	1,845+	Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy (1973). Most systematic count ever produced; spans 17 of 39 OT books.
NT references to the Second Coming	318	Across 216 NT chapters. Combined OT+NT total: over 2,100 references.
Distinct First Coming prophecies (non-repetitive)	109	Reagan, Christ in Prophecy Study Guide. All literally fulfilled; sets hermeneutical standard.
Total OT Messianic prophecies (both Advents)	300+	Consensus: Pentecost, Walvoord, Ryrie. Includes overlapping texts.
Pages in Peters's Theocratic Kingdom (3 vols.)	2,189	Peters (1884; repr. Kregel 1952). 30 years of labor; 4,000+ citations.
OT books with prominent Kingdom content	17 of 39	Payne's count. All Major Prophets + most Minor Prophets + Psalms + historical.
Ezekiel chapters on Millennial Temple alone	9 (Ezek 40–48)	More architectural detail than the tabernacle or Solomon's temple.
Ratio: 2nd Coming to 1st Coming OT references	≈6:1	Derived from Payne (1,845) vs 300+ First Coming texts.

i Why no single exact number: (1) what qualifies as a "Kingdom reference" vs. a general Messianic reference; (2) whether typological texts count alongside direct prophetic statements; (3) whether Second Coming and Millennial Kingdom passages are counted separately or together.

► Walvoord: "It is just as wrong to explain away prophetic passages about the millennium as it is to explain away historic passages referring to the virgin birth." The volume alone makes amillennial dismissal a radical, not a conservative, move.

The most rigorous count is 1,845+ OT references to the Second Coming / Messianic era (Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, 1973). Combined with 318 NT references, the total exceeds 2,100. The ratio of Second Coming to First Coming OT prophecies is approximately 6:1. Ezekiel devotes 9 chapters (40–48) to the Millennial Temple alone.

G.2 Twelve Themes of the Millennial Kingdom — Master Matrix

Every OT Kingdom passage can be classified under one or more of these twelve themes.

#	Theme	Primary OT Passages	What It Establishes
1	The King — Identity, Character & Authority	Ps 2; 72; 110; Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–5; Jer 23:5–6; Dan 7:13–14	Who rules; Davidic lineage; universal dominion
2	Political Government, Justice & Law	Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–5; Ps 72; Zech 14:9	Jerusalem as world capital; end of war; universal justice
3	The Temple: Structure, Worship & Glory	Ezek 40–48; Zech 14:16–21	Millennial Temple detail; glory returns; memorial sacrifices
4	Israel: Conversion, Regathering & Exaltation	Zech 12:10–13:1; Isa 11:11–16; Ezek 36–37	National repentance; final regathering; Israel as head of nations
5–6	Holy Spirit & Spiritual Life	Joel 2:28–29; Isa 11:9; Jer 31:33–34	Spirit outpouring; universal knowledge of God
7–9	Physical Transformation, Animals & Health	Zech 14:4–10; Isa 11:6–9; 65:20; Ezek 47	Topography changed; animal peace; extended longevity
10–12	Economics, Joy & Gentile Nations	Isa 65:21–22; Zech 14:16–21; Isa 60	Labor curse reversed; universal worship; nations serve Israel

The twelve themes collectively demand a literal, earthly, future Millennium. Spiritualizing Themes 7–9 (topography, animals, longevity) into the Church Age or heaven destroys ordinary language.

G.3 By the Book: Distribution Across the OT Canon

The following matrix maps Kingdom content across OT books, indicating density of Kingdom material, tier, primary passages, and contribution. VERY HIGH = multiple major chapters devoted to Kingdom themes; High = significant sections; Medium = dedicated passages; Low = key individual verses.^{86,14}

Book	Density	Tier	Primary Kingdom Passages	Key Contributions
Genesis	Medium	Foundation	12:1–3; 15:18–21; 17; 49:10	Abrahamic Covenant; Judah's scepter prophecy
Numbers	Low	Foundation	24:17–19	Balaam's oracle: star from Jacob, scepter from Israel
Deuteronomy	Medium	Foundation	30:1–10; 32:43	Palestinian Covenant; worldwide regathering
2 Samuel	Low–Med	Foundation	7:12–16	Davidic Covenant: eternal throne, dynasty, kingdom
Psalms	VERY HIGH	Primary	Pss 2; 22; 46; 72; 89; 96–99; 110; 132	Royal/Enthronement Psalms: Messianic King; universal dominion; rod of iron
Isaiah	VERY HIGH	Primary	2:2–4; 9:6–7; 11:1–16; 32–35; 60–66	The richest single Kingdom source: King, transformed nature, worldwide worship, New Creation
Jeremiah	High	Primary	23:5–6; 30–31; 33:14–26	The Branch; New Covenant; restoration of Israel and Judah
Ezekiel	VERY HIGH	Primary	34–37; 40–48	Millennial Temple (9 chapters); glory returning; life-giving river; tribal allotments
Daniel	High	Primary	2:44–45; 7:13–14, 27; 12:1–3	Four-empire sequence ends in Kingdom; Son of Man receives dominion; saints co-reign
Hosea	Medium	Secondary	2:14–23; 3:4–5; 5:15–6:3	Covenant renewal; return to David; timing hint of Church Age gap
Joel	Medium	Secondary	2:28–32; 3:17–21	Spirit outpouring; living waters from Jerusalem; Day of the LORD
Amos	Medium	Secondary	9:11–15	Booth of David restored; agricultural superabundance; never uprooted again
Micah	High	Primary	4:1–5; 5:2–5	Jerusalem as world capital; swords to plowshares; Messiah from Bethlehem
Zechariah	VERY HIGH	Primary	2:10–13; 6:12–13; 8; 9:9–10; 12:10–13:1; 14	Most comprehensive 2nd Coming/Kingdom chapter (Zech 14): Mt. Olives, topography, living waters, Tabernacles, universal holiness

Malachi	Low	Secondary	1:11; 4:1–6	Sun of Righteousness; Elijah before the Day of the LORD; final OT Kingdom statement
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Appendix H — OT-NT Master Prophetic Relationship Matrix

This matrix classifies major OT prophetic passages according to their relationship to the New Testament. Direction of dependence is consistently OT → NT.

Theme / Event	Primary OT Foundation (NASB)	Key NT Reference	Relationship Type	Key Scholar Notes
Tribulation Severity	Dan 12:1 — time of distress such as never occurred...	Matt 24:21	Source Text	Pentecost; BKC; Constable. Jesus quotes Daniel directly.
Israel Mortality (2/3)	Zech 13:8–9 — two parts cut off; one-third refined	Rev 12 (no figure)	OT Only	Fruchtenbaum; Ryrie. No NT parallel for the statistic.
Davidic Covenant / King	2 Sam 7:12–16; Isa 9:6–7; Jer 23:5–6	Luke 1:32–33; Heb 1:5	Source + Parallel	Walvoord; Ryrie; Pentecost. Literal future Davidic throne.
Millennial Temple	Ezek 40–48 (9 chapters); Ezek 43:1–5 glory returns	Rev 21–22 (post-Millennium)	OT Only + NT Expansion	Walvoord; Ryrie; Constable. Memorial sacrifices.
Animal Kingdom Peace	Isa 11:6–9; 65:25; Hos 2:18	Rom 8:19–22	OT Primary + Echo	Ryrie (literal animals); Constable; Pentecost.
Covenant Curses (Legal Basis)	Lev 26; Deut 28 — sword, famine, pestilence, wild beasts	Rev 6, 8–9, 16	OT Only (legal basis)	Price; Constable; BKC. Explains why judgments take these forms.
Jerusalem World Capital	Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–5 — law from Zion	Rev 20 context	Parallel Primary	BKC; Constable; Walvoord. Literal world capital.
Israel National Repentance	Zech 12:10 — look on Me whom they pierced	Rev 1:7; Rom 11:25–27	Source + Parallel	Constable; BKC; Pentecost. National conversion at 2nd Coming.
Gentile Nations in Kingdom	Isa 60; Zech 8:20–23; Ps 22:27–29	Rev 21:24–26	OT Primary + Echo	Walvoord; Constable. Nations serve Israel as mediating nation.

This matrix demonstrates the consistent OT → NT direction of dependence and highlights content that is OT-only or provides unique detail (geography, statistics, legal basis) absent from the NT.

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”
— Revelation 22:20 (NASB)

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