**Bible Interpretation and the Biblical Covenants**

1. **Bible Interpretation: A Foundation for Our Study of Bible Prophecy**

**Foundation #1: God speaks to us \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and personally through His Word.**

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17 ESV)

“And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:19–21 ESV)

**When we read Scripture, we are not reading the words of godly men. We are reading the very words of God. The words in the Bible originate from God’s mind and are directed to us with authority and meaning.**

**Foundation #2: When God speaks to us, He is a Master \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

“But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. ***Have you not read this Scripture***: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”” (Mark 12:7–11 ESV)

1. **God is life-giving does not speak unnecessarily.**
2. **God is purposive and does not speak frivolously.**
3. **God is intelligent does not speak unclearly.**

““The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 29:28–29 ESV)

**Foundation #3: God communicates much in His Word about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

“remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.

“Listen to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.”” (Isaiah 46:9–13 ESV)

Someone has counted 319 verses in the New Testament which are devoted to the return of Christ. This means that one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament is related to this major doctrine.

“No course of study on the principles of Biblical interpretation could be complete if prophecy were omitted. Prophecy constitutes a large part of the sacred Scriptures, therefore to neglect it or, as some have done, to utter a boasted contempt for the subject of prophecy, is to cast dishonor upon divine revelation. Moreover, if the prophecies were not in the Bible, the remainder of the Book would be meaningless.

The first ray of light and hope to come to the world immediately after the fall of man was the promise of a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). This first prediction is the pivotal prophecy of the entire Word of God.” Lehman Strauss, <https://bible.org/article/bible-prophecy>

**Six Principles of Sound Bible Interpretation that Impact our View of Bible Prophecy**

**Principle #1: When the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sense makes sense, seek no other sense.** This is true of every genre of biblical literature, including prophecy.

The literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation seeks to discover the original meaning that the author intended to convey using an understanding of language that is normal or customary. This method understands words to possess objective meaning that can be understood by the interpreter when considered in their ordinary meaning. This method acknowledges symbols, metaphors, figures of speech and other grammatical devices, but only does so when it is warranted by the normal rules of human communication. This is the method people naturally use to understand one another in ordinary conversation.

Figures of speech are an important part of human communication,

When we read a prophetic passage of Scripture, we do not automatically seek a figurative, hidden or allegorical meaning behind the words unless there is something compelling in the context of the passage that leads us to do so.

Any interpretive principle that seeks to find hidden meaning behind the text ultimately robs the text of meaning and authority. Only the grammatical, historical method of interpretation protects the objective meaning of God’s Word.

Illustration: US Constitution. Jefferson said that we must:

*Carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit in the debates, and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text, or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed.**[26](http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/documents/articles/25/25.htm?x=x" \l "sdfootnote26sym)* Thomas Jefferson, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Albert Bergh, ed. (Washington D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XV, p. 449, in a letter from Jefferson to Justice William Johnson on June 12, 1823.

**Illustration of mixing the use of the grammatical, historical method and spiritualization method in the same text:** “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. (Grammatical, historical). He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. (Grammatical, historical). And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David (spiritual) ,and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever (spiritual) , and of his kingdom there will be no end.”” (Luke 1:31–33 ESV)

For more on the impact of the grammatical, historical method of interpretation upon one’s prophetic understanding see the following from Andy Woods:

<http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/documents/articles/25/25.htm?x=x#sdfootnote26sym>

**Principle #2: Use Scripture to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Scripture.**

Because God is consistent with Himself, the Bible is always consistent with itself. Two passages never contradict each other, but one often sheds light upon another.

Illustration: Daniel AND Revelation.

“He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.” (Daniel 7:25 ESVi)

“And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.” (Daniel 12:7 ESVi)

“but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”” (Revelation 11:2, 3 ESVi)

“and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.” (Revelation 12:6 ESVi)

“But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.” (Revelation 12:14 ESVi)

Illustration: Isaiah 2:2-4 AND Revelation 20

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall 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 his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”(Isaiah 2:2–4 ESV)

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:1–4 ESV)

**We must interpret Scripture with Scripture to get a complete picture of God’s prophetic revelation.**

**Principle #3: God has revealed that prophetic passages often have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ fulfillment and an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ fulfillment in view.**

“Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.” (Isaiah 7:10–16 ESV)

*In its first fulfilment to the birth of a child at the time of Ahaz of a child who would be a sign to him of the impending destruction of Syrian king Rezin and Israel’s king Pekah by the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser III. In its second fulfillment, the Messiah is born to the virgin Mary to literally be “God with us.” (See Matthew 1:23)*

“And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said, ***“As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”*** And they asked him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these things must first take place, but the end will not be at once.” Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness. Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death. You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives. ***“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.*** Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. **“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world.** For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”” (Luke 21:5–28 ESV)

**Principle #4: Bible prophecies are often given with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ intervals in their fulfillment.**

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, *and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.” (Isaiah 61:1–4 ESV)*

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”” (Luke 4:15–21 ESV)

**Principle #5: Figurative language should be interpreted in view of the biblical and historical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, “**Son of man, can these bones live?”** And I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.” (Ezekiel 37:1–5 ESV)

“Then he said to me, **“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.** Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”” (Ezekiel 37:11–14 ESV)

“**And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.” (Revelation 12:3–6 ESV)

“**And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan**, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” (Revelation 12:9–10 ESV)

“But the woman **was given the two wings of the great eagle** so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.” (Revelation 12:14 ESV)

“while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and **how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself**.”

(Exodus 19:3–4 ESV)

**Principle #6: The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Apocalyptic Literature**

We must acknowledge that good students (those who are sincere in wanting to follow the above four principles) of Scripture disagree more frequently on eschatology than perhaps any other subject in theology. Have you ever wondered why that is? There are at least two reasons for that:

1. We are finite human beings. We must ever be humble before both the Lord and His Word, speaking with boldness where God’s Word is clearly known and being careful not to speak with more boldness than our knowledge would indicate.

*Deuteronomy 29:29--“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

Eschatology is about the future. The future is no more or less certain to God than the past is! *Isaiah 46:8-11--“Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,10declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’11calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.*

However, this is not so for us human beings. The past is far more certain than the future is. As a result, we can look at the Scriptures, even carefully, and not know what they are saying until the matters are accomplished. For example, the idea that the Messiah would die and would rise again is very clearly taught in the Old Testament. Yet the disciples were completely baffled by this concept until it was taking place. This should not hinder our pursuit of the meaning of God’s Word about the future, but it should cause us to be humble about it.

1. Much of what the Bible says about the future is written in a literary form called, “apocalyptic.” Of all of the kinds of literature in the Bible, apocalyptic is the most challenging. Here are some prominent characteristics of apocalyptic literature.
2. Visions as the primary source of revelation
3. Extravagant symbolism, often involving animals, numbers, and colors
4. Prominence of angels and demons
5. The battle and ultimate triumph of good over evil
6. The juxtaposition of the present evil with the future good
7. Judgment concerning the present age under God’s control
8. The end of the present age in violent judgment under God’s direction
9. God is triumphant and sovereign

There are significant portions of Daniel, Revelation, and Ezekiel written in the apocalyptic form. Since this is a less familiar form to us, it is important to acknowledge that this will mean greater difficulty in interpretation.

**The Biblical Covenants that Form the Foundation of God’s Plan for the Future**

The Idea for Covenants

--Definition: “*COVENANT Oath-bound promise whereby one party solemnly pledges to bless or serve another party in some specified way. Sometimes the keeping of the promise depends upon the meeting of certain conditions by the party to whom the promise is made. On other occasions the promise is made unilaterally and unconditionally. The covenant concept is a central, unifying theme of Scripture, establishing and defining God’s relationship to man in all ages.*

 *In the OT, the Hebrew word translated “covenant” is* ***berit****. The term probably derives from the verb* ***bara,*** *“to bind.” The noun* ***berit*** *originally denoted a binding relationship between two parties in which each pledged to perform some service for the other. The NT, following the Septuagint, uniformly uses the Greek word* ***diatheke*** *for the covenant idea, avoiding the similar term* ***suntheke****, which would wrongly portray a covenant as a mutual contract or alliance rather than an oath-bound promise. This does not mean that a covenant may not, in some cases, take on characteristics common to a mutual agreement or contract, but the essence of the covenant concept is clearly that of a binding pledge.”*

Steven B. Cowan, “COVENANT,” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, paragraph 3981.

**Covenant #1: The Abrahamic Covenant**

“Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And **I will make of you a great nation**, and **I will bless you and make your name great,** so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “**To your offspring I will give this land.”** So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.”

(Genesis 12:1–7 ESV)

“The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.””

(Genesis 13:14–17 ESV)

“After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

And he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” **But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”** He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

**As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.** Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

**When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces**. **On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram**, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.””

(Genesis 15:1–21 ESV)

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham,for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”” (Genesis 17:1–8 ESV)

“And Abraham said to God, “Oh that Ishmael might live before you!” God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and **you shall call his name Isaac.** **I will establish my covenant with him** as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.” (Genesis 17:18–19 ESV)

“And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.””(Genesis 22:15–18 ESV)

**Three Key Provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant**

**Provision # 1: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blessing to Abraham**

 God promises to give Abraham many children and to make his name great in the world. God promised that He would make a great nation of Abraham and that He would prosper Abraham.

**Provision #2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Blessing to Abraham’s offspring**

 God promises that He would create a great nation from Abraham and that He would bless that nation. God identifies that this nation will flows through Abraham and Sarah’s son, Isaac. This nation would possess the land of Canaan as an eternal possession.

**Provision #3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Blessing through Abraham**

 God promises that all the nations of the earth will be blessed through Abraham and his offspring. God was not abandoning other peoples in His election of Abraham as the focal point of His divine blessing and grace. This universal blessing has its ultimate fulfillment in the future offspring of Abraham, Jesus.

**The Nature of the Abrahamic Covenant: Conditional or Unconditional?**

Whether we view the Abrahamic covenant as conditional or unconditional will shape in a major way our understanding of the prophetic Scriptures. We cannot overstate the importance of this question. If the AC (Abrahamic Covenant) is conditional then national Israel may forfeit all the unfulfilled promises God made to them and thus have no guaranteed future blessing. If the AC is unconditional, national Israel will receive all the unfulfilled promises God made to them and the nation’s future blessing is guaranteed.

**--The Argument for the Abrahamic Covenant Being Conditional**

“And God said to Abraham, **“As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep,** between me and you and your offspring after you: **Every male among you shall be circumcised**. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. **So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.””** (Genesis 17:9–14 ESV)

**Argument:** Genesis 17 shows that the Abrahamic Covenant was conditional to the obedience of God’s commands.

*“The mass of those who then called themselves Israelites ceased to be such for prophetic and covenant purposes, having forfeited their citizenship in the commonwealth of Israel by refusing to accept the Messiah, and that after this event all the privileges of the Abrahamic Covenant . . . belonged to the believing remnant, and to them only; which remnant was therefore and thereafter the true Israel and Judah, the Seed of Abraham, the Christian Church . . . it may seem harsh to say that, God is through with the Jews.” But the fact of that matter is that He is through with them as a unified national group.” Loraine Boettner*

““But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and my soul will abhor you. **And I will lay your cities waste and will make your sanctuaries desolate,** and I will not smell your pleasing aromas. And I myself will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it. And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, **and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.”** (Leviticus 26:27–33 ESV)

**Argument:** Israel’s disobedience removes the promise of the land that the Abrahamic covenant pledged.

“and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”” (Genesis 22:18 ESV)

“I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.””

(Genesis 26:4–5 ESV)

**Argument:** These passages support the conditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Why is this matter so important? Because if the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, national Israel still will receive the promised blessings of national existence, a land and a people set apart for God.

**--The Argument for the Abrahamic Covenant Being Unconditional**

1. **The only obedience required prior to the initial giving of the covenant in Genesis 12 was Abraham’s leaving his home.** We do not know what God would have done had Abraham not received the command/invitation to go to the land that God would show him.
2. **In Genesis 12, there clearly are no conditions presented at the beginning of the covenant.**
3. **To say that God added conditions after the covenant was ratified rejects the clear principle of Galatians 3:15:** “To give a human example, brothers:even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.”
4. **Regarding the conditional language found in Genesis 17, 22, and 26, the condition was not attached to the promise, but to the individuals who would personally lose the benefits of the promise.** Individuals in the nation are not guaranteed to receive the benefits of the promise, but the nation is. Unbelief resulting in disobedience will remove an individual from personally receiving the blessings of the promise, but unbelief in the nation in one generation does not remove the blessing from the nation forever.
5. **Furthermore, these conditional statements were made long after the ratification of the covenant by God.**
6. **The ratification of the AC in Genesis 15:7-21 clearly demonstrates God’s unilateral commitment to fulfill all the blessings of the AC. God caused Abraham to enter into a deep sleep so that He could walk through the pieces of animal sacrifices alone. The fulfillment of the promises of the AC depend wholly upon God.**
7. **The duration of the AC has no expiration. It is an everlasting covenant.**

(NOTE: God employs the terms “forever” or “everlasting” on numerous occasions when referencing the AC: Genesis 13:15; 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Chronicles 16:16-17; Psalm 105:9-10. This term “olam” is the strongest expression of eternity in the Hebrew language. While this term does not require that meaning of an infinite future, it does at least require the meaning of continuance as long as this present earth endures.)

“Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the Lord of hosts is his name: “If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the Lord, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.”” (Jeremiah 31:34–36 ESV)

1. **Dozens of later passages teach the unconditional nature of the AC:**

“And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”” (Genesis 50:24 ESV)

“During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.” (Exodus 2:22–25 ESV)

““When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice. **For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.” (Deuteronomy 4:25–31 ESV)**

“Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.“ Know, therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.”

(Deuteronomy 9:5–7 ESV)

“Now Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now.” (2 Kings 13:22–23 ESV). **(Note: This takes place around 600 years after God made the AC.)**

“Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. **You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.”** (Micah 7:18–20 ESV)

“And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; **to show the mercy promised to our fathers and** **to remember his holy covenant**, **the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”** (Luke 1:67–75 ESV)

“**You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham**, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”” (Acts 3:25–26 ESV). (NOTE: Peter preached this message several months after the nation of Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah and King. Peter maintains that the covenant is still in effect and that the Jews he preached to still “ARE” the sons of the prophets and of the covenant. They had not lost their place as such sons.)

“For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. **But it is not as though the word of God has failed.** For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.” (Romans 9:3–8 ESV). (NOTE: First, Paul says the covenants still “belong” to national Israel. Second, that the failure of individual Israelites does not negate God’s covenant to them as a people. Third, Paul is speaking to Jews as a distinct people belonging to Israel, not to Gentile believers. (See Romans 11:30 where the Gentiles are addressed.)

“For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, **“Surely** I will bless you and multiply you.””

(Hebrews 6:13–14 ESV).

“So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.” (Hebrews 6:17–18 ESV).

**Two Key New Testament Passages**

1. **Romans 9**: “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”” (Romans 9:6–7 ESV).

This passage does not reference believing Gentiles who now comprise the new Israel. The idea of Gentiles’ inclusion in the AC is not in Romans 9. The division that Paul references here is the division between believing Jews and unbelieving Jews. The point here is that not all ethnic Jews are part of the nation of Israel that is promised blessing by God.

1. **Galatians 3:** “Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? **Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.** And the Scripture, **foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”** So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”(Galatians 3:5–9 ESV).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:28–29 ESV)

This passage helps us understand that the AC does promise blessing to all nations of the earth. This passage does not negate the promises to ethnic Israel. Gentiles who believe in Jesus are included in the AC and blessed as “sons of Abraham.” But the universal provision of the AC does not obliterate or replace the fulfillment of the national provision of the AC.

**Covenant #2: The Palestinian (Land) Covenant**

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Command the people of Israel, and say to them, When you enter the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall to you for an inheritance, the land of Canaan as defined by its borders),your south side shall be from the wilderness of Zin alongside Edom, and your southern border shall run from the end of the Salt Sea on the east. And your border shall turn south of the ascent of Akrabbim, and cross to Zin, and its limit shall be south of Kadesh-barnea. Then it shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass along to Azmon. And the border shall turn from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, and its limit shall be at the sea.

“For the western border, you shall have the Great Sea and its coast. This shall be your western border. “This shall be your northern border: from the Great Sea you shall draw a line to Mount Hor. From Mount Hor you shall draw a line to Lebo-hamath, and the limit of the border shall be at Zedad.Then the border shall extend to Ziphron, and its limit shall be at Hazar-enan. This shall be your northern border. “You shall draw a line for your eastern border from Hazar-enan to Shepham. And the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain. And the border shall go down and reach to the shoulder of the Sea of Chinnereth on the east. And the border shall go down to the Jordan, and its limit shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land as defined by its borders all around.”” (Numbers 34:1–12 ESV)

““**And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God**, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and **he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.** If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. **And the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.** And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. And the Lord your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you. And you shall again obey the voice of the Lord and keep all his commandments that I command you today. The Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, when you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

(Deuteronomy 30:1–10 ESV). (NOTE: A future scattering of Israel and a future regathering back to the land is anticipated from the beginning.)

Truths about the Palestinian Covenant

1. The Palestinian Covenant (PC) is an extension of the AC.
2. Because it is an extension of the AC, it too is unconditional. The fulfillment of the PC is conditional in reference to specific generations of Israelites, but it is not ultimately conditional.
3. Because it is an extension of the AC, it too is everlasting. An everlasting possession of land is very different from a temporary, partial possession of land.
4. There is a difference between owning the land as promised and living in the land and enjoying its blessings.
5. The PC was NOT fulfilled at any time in OT history.

Arguments for a fulfilling in the OT of the PC land promises:

“So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.” (Joshua 11:23 ESV)

“Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.” (Joshua 21:43–45 ESV)

**NOTE:** When these statements are written, Israel had not come close to possessing the land area that was promised. This fact is recognized in Joshua’s account following each of these statements.

*“Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the Lord said to him, “You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess.” (Joshua 13:1 ESV)*

*“Behold, I have allotted to you as an inheritance for your tribes those nations that remain, along with all the nations that I have already cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the west. The Lord your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight. And you shall possess their land, just as the Lord your God promised you.” (Joshua 23:4–5 ESV).*

So the land was not yet fully possessed by Israel. The statements in Joshua 11 and 21 reflect the fact that the promise of God was being fulfilled and that the present generation was receiving their share of the land from God. But these statements do not indicate final fulfillment as the text makes clear.

“Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

Solomon’s provision for one day was thirty cors of fine flour and sixty cors of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture-fed cattle, a hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl. For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphsah to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him. And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.” (1 Kings 4:21–26 ESV)

In Solomon’s day, he ruled over this area, but Israel did not possess the land. The foreign kings still ruled, albeit they gave tribute to Solomon.

Later prophets make clear that a future fulfillment of the land promise is expected and awaited:

(See Isaiah 11:1-12; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 43:1-8; 66:20; Jer. 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 30:1-11; 31:31-40; 32:37-44; Ezek. 20:42; 34:11-16; 39:25-29; Hosea 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:4-7; Zech. 8:3-8).

““Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.” (Jeremiah 16:14–15 ESV)

In clear, plain language, God promised a real land for a real future for the real nation of Israel. The fact that God’s people also look for a better country in heaven does not negate his promises to us here on earth.

**Covenant #3: The Davidic Covenant**

“Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. **And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me.Your throne shall be established forever.’”** In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.” (2 Samuel 7:8–17 ESV)

“You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’” *Selah*” Psalms 89:3–4 ESV). “Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies.” *Selah*” (Psalms 89:35–37 ESV)

**Five Provisions of the Davidic Covenant (DC):**

**Provision #1: David’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be great.**

**Provision #2: David would have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from his enemies.**

**Provision #3: David \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would last forever.**

**Provision #4: David’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would reign forever.** The line of David’s right to rule over Israel would never pass away permanently. It might be disrupted in time, but it would ultimately remain.

**Provision #5: David’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would not permanently pass away.**

**Truths about the David Covenant (DC):**

1. **As an extension of the Abrahamic Covenant, the DC is unconditional and eternal.** Again, disobedience would negate the blessings to an individual or a generation, but not ultimately to the whole nation.
2. **When Davidic kings rebelled, the DC kept God from acting toward them like He did toward Saul**.

“So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. **Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days,** but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. **However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”” (1 Kings 11:6–13 ESV)**

1. **The first two provisions of the DC have been fulfilled literally.** There is no biblical or theological reason to interpret the other three provisions spiritually.
2. **The throne of God in heaven is not the same as the throne of David on earth.** David’s throne began in time with David, but God’s throne began in eternity past with God. God’s throne sovereignly rules over all creation; David’s throne rules over all Israel. God’s throne is located in heaven; David’s throne is located on earth. Jesus’ present rule in heaven does not negate a future earthly rule on the throne of David on earth.
3. **The future fulfillment of the DC will occur when Jesus returns to the earth to rule and reign.**

**Covenant #4: The New Covenant**

““**Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah**, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the Lord of hosts is his name: “If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the Lord, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.”

Thus says the Lord: “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the Lord.”” (Jeremiah 31:31–37 ESV)

“**I will make with them an everlasting** covenant, **that I will not turn away** from doing good to them. **And I will put the fear** of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. **I will rejoice** in doing them good, and **I will plant** them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.” (Jeremiah 32:40–41 ESV)

““For thus says the Lord God: **I will deal with you** as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, **yet I will remember** my covenant with you in the days of your youth, **and I will establish for you** an everlasting covenant. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord, that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord God.”” (Ezekiel 16:59–63 ESV)

““**I will make** with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. **And I will make them** and the places all around my hill a blessing, and **I will send down** the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. **And I will provide for them** renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.”” (Ezekiel 34:25–31 ESV)

““Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. **And I will vindicate** the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. **I will take you from the nations** and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land**. I will sprinkle clean water** on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you**. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **And I will put my Spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules**. You shall dwell in the land** that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. **And I will deliver you** from all your uncleannesses. **And I will summon the grain** and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord God; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

“Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, **I will cause the cities to be inhabited**, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the Lord; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the Lord; **I have spoken, and I will do it.**

“Thus says the Lord God: **This also I will let the house of Israel** ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock. Like the flock for sacrifices,like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”” (Ezekiel 36:21–38 ESV)

“The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, take a stick and write on it, ‘For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him’; then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. **And when your people say to you, ‘Will you not tell us what you mean by these?**’ say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. **And I will join with it the stick of Judah**, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, **I will take the people of Israel** from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. **And I will make them one nation** in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. **But I will save them** from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, **and will cleanse them**; and they shall be my people, and **I will be their God**. “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. **I will make a covenant of peace with them.** It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. **And I will set them in their land** and multiply them, **and will set my sanctuary** in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and **I will** be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations **will know that I am the Lord** who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”” (Ezekiel 37:14–28 ESV)

“Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers:a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”” (Romans 11:24–27 ESV)

“But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.”” (Hebrews 8:6–12 ESV)

**The Nature of the New Covenant (NC)**

The NC flows as an extension of the AC. Like the AC, it is eternal and unconditional. God emphasizes His actions more in the AC than in any other covenant. Many times God says, “I will” to secure the promises made to His own faithfulness (See Ezekiel 34 and 37).

This covenant is made with the people of Israel (See Jeremiah 31:31; 36:22). Israel alone is the party with whom God makes this covenant in the OT. This covenant is contrasted with the Mosaic Law covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. The Gentile nations were not part of that covenant.

**The Provisions of the New Covenant**

While some physical blessing related to land are included, the NC emphasizes the internal, spiritual blessings that God will sovereignly bring to pass for Israel.

Provision #1: God will forgive their sin.

Provision #2: God will bring a spiritual regeneration to Israel.

Provision #3: God will give His people the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to empower them for obedience.

Provision #4: God will give His people an experiential, full knowledge of the Lord.

Provision #5: With the knowledge of the Lord and obedience to Him, many material blessings will flow to this nation.

**The Fulfillment of the New Covenant**

When the OT prophets spoke about the NC, they always viewed it as future. The fulfilling of this covenant was connected to the restoration of the land to the nation. (See Jer 32:36-41; Ezek. 36:24-25; 37:11-14)

The blessings of the NC were secured in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus. But they were not all received by Israel. Paul anticipated a future fulfillment of the NC around 25 years after Jesus’ death and resurrection. (See Romans 11). When Paul uses the term “Israel” eleven times in Romans 9-11, he always refers to ethnic Israel and not to Gentiles who believe.

“So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! **Now I am speaking to you Gentiles**. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

**But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,** do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, **“Branches were broken off** so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. **They were broken off because of their unbelief**, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. **For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.** Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. **For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.”** (Romans 11:11–24 ESV)

**Comments: The root of the olive tree refers to the Abrahamic covenant. The natural branches refer to national Israel. The wild olive shoot refers to Gentiles who believe.**

“Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers:a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,” (Romans 11:24–26 ESV)

What is the relationship of the church to the New Covenant?

Paul Benware makes six key points (Understanding End Times Prophecy, p. 75-78) :

1. The church does not fulfill the new covenant given to Israel in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the other prophets.
2. The silence of the OT prophets on the place of the church in the new covenant does not automatically rule out the church from having some sort of relationship with this covenant. (See the mystery of the church in Ephesians 3:3-6)
3. Provision for the blessing of Gentiles was made in the Abrahamic covenant. The salvation and blessing of Gentiles was always part of God’s plan and concern.
4. The church does partake in the blessings of the new covenant, but not all of them.
5. The church is related to the new covenant in the communion service.
6. The apostle Paul views himself and others as ministers of the new covenant in 2 Corinthians 3. Paul’s ministry focused on the Gentiles. . .

*“The church, then, is a partaker of the spiritual blessings of the new covenant, enjoying regeneration, the forgiveness of sin, and the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit. . . . But the church is not national Israel, the people with whom God made this covenant. The church does not and cannot fulfill the new covenant. Its fulfillment awaits the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. When He returns at the second coming, all the spiritual and material blessings promised Israel will be received.”* Benware, p. 77-78.

**Review of five key points:**

1. The biblical covenants were made with national Israel with promises for national Israel.
2. The four biblical covenants covered are unconditional and eternal.
3. The four biblical covenants are connected to each other, not independent of each other.
4. Sin and unbelief can and will cause individuals and generations in Israel to lose the blessings of these covenants. But sin and unbelief does not annul these covenants.
5. We can expect that God will be faithful to fulfill all His promises to Israel literally.

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

(Romans 11:33–36 ESV)

Appendix:

1. Glossary of Terms.
2. Map of the Promised Land. Page 58.
3. A Simple Prophetic Timeline. Page 201.

**The Premillennial Return of the Messiah**

**A Review of the Timeline**

**The Definition of the Premillennial Return of Jesus the Messiah**

**Premillennialism:** The Lord Jesus will bodily return to the earth with His resurrected saints to establish his rule over the nations. He will sit on David’s throne in Jerusalem, ruling over Israel and all the nations with righteousness, peace and prosperity for one thousand years.

**The Nature of the Millennial Kingdom**

**--The Government of the Millennial Kingdom**

1. **A real, earthly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Psalms 2:6–8 (ESV)

“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.’”

Isaiah 9:6–7 (ESV)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

Isaiah 11:3–5, 10 (ESV)

“And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins . . . “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.”

Daniel 2:35–45 (ESV)

“Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

“This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, . . . —you are the head of gold. Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. *And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever*, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.””

1. **Jesus the Messiah will be the ­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

2 Samuel 7:12–13, 16 (ESV)

“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish *the throne of his kingdom forever* . . .And your house and *your kingdom shall be made sure forever* before me. *Your throne shall be established forever.’””*

Luke 1:31–33 (ESV)

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.””

Matthew 1:25–2:6 (ESV)

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”” (

Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Revelation 19:16 (NIV)

On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

1. **The government will possess ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over the whole of the earth.**

Daniel 7:13–14 (ESV)

““I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”

1. **The government will be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, righteous and just.**

Isaiah 42:1–4 (ESV)

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.”

Jeremiah 23:3–6 (ESV)

“Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord. “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”

**--The Spiritual life of the Millennium**

1. **The glorious presence of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Matthew 24:29–31 (ESV)

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Isaiah 66:14–16 (ESV)

“You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants, and he shall show his indignation against his enemies. “For behold, the Lord will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the Lord enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the Lord shall be many.”

Isaiah 66:23 (ESV)

“From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord.”

1. **Salvation of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of people**

Isaiah 11:9 (ESV)

“They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

Isaiah 33:5–6 (ESV)

“The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is Zion’s treasure.”

Isaiah 46:12–13 (ESV)

““Listen to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.””

Isaiah 52:9–10 (ESV)

“Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

Isaiah 62:1–2 (ESV)

“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give.”

1. **The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of the Lord.**

Isaiah 11:9–12 (ESV)

“They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Jeremiah 31:33–34 (ESV)

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.””

1. **The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of people.**

Psalms 72:1–11 (ESV)

“Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! *Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!*

May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! *In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!*

May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth! May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!”

1. **The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_spirit.**

Isaiah 61:3–7 (ESV)

“to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; but you shall be called the priests of the Lord; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. *Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy.”*

Jeremiah 30:17–19 (ESV)

““Thus says the Lord: Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be. Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small.”

1. **The Binding of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Revelation 20:1–3 (ESV)

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.”

**--The Social, Economic and Physical Aspects of the Millennium**

1. **The universal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Isaiah 2:2–4 (ESV)

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall 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 his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. *He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and* *they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*

Micah 4:3–5 (ESV)

“He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken*. For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.”*

1. **Conflict within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be dissolved.**

Isaiah 11:5–9 (ESV)

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

1. **The curse on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lifted**

Isaiah 35:1–2 (ESV)

“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.”

Isaiah 35:6–7 (ESV)

“For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.”

Isaiah 30:23 (NIV)

He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows.

Isaiah 51:3 (ESV)

“For the Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.”

Ezekiel 47:6–12 (ESV)

“And he said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other. And he said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh. And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes*. Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea.* But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.””

1. **General \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Joel 2:20–27 (ESV)

““Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things! Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit; the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

“Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.

“The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you.

“You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.”

Amos 9:13–15 (ESV)

““Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,” says the Lord your God.”

Isaiah 65:21–25 (ESV)

“They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the Lord.”

1. **Health and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Isaiah 33:24 (ESV)

“And no inhabitant will say, “I am sick”; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.”

Isaiah 35:4–6 (ESV)

“Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”

Isaiah 29:18 (ESV)

“In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.”

Isaiah 65:19–20 (ESV)

“I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.”

1. **The exaltation of the city of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Isaiah 66:10–13 ESV)

““Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious abundance.”

For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.”

Zechariah 14:2–4 (ESV)

“For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.”

Zechariah 14:10–11 (ESV)

“The whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft on its site from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction.Jerusalem shall dwell in security.”

**--The Duration of the Millennial Kingdom**

Daniel 2:44 (ESV)

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,”

Revelation 20:1–6 (ESV)

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”

**The Description of the Second Coming of Jesus**

1. **The return of Christ occurs after the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Matthew 24:21–24 (ESV)

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”

Matthew 24:28–31 (ESV)

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

**(This same order appears in Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:25-27 and Rev. 6-19)**

1. **The return of Christ brings the destruction of rebellious nations and individuals.**

Zechariah 14:1–9 (ESV)

“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 shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.

On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea.It shall continue in summer as in winter.

And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.”

Revelation 19:9–21 (ESV)

 “And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.”

1. **The return of Christ is personal and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Acts 1:8–11 (ESV)

“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.””

Zechariah 14:3–4 (ESV)

“Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.”

1. **The return of Christ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and glorious.**

Matthew 24:27 (ESV)

“For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

Acts 1:9–11 (ESV)

“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.””

Revelation 1:7 (ESV)

“Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.”

Revelation 19:11–12 (ESV)

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.”

1. **The return of Christ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Romans 11:25–26 (ESV)

“And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, *“The Deliverer will come from Zion*, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”

Zechariah 14:1–4 (ESV)

“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 shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.”

1. **The return of Christ is accompanied by the angels and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

Matthew 25:31 (ESV)

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.”

Jude 1:14–15 (ESV)

“It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all . . .”

1 Thessalonians 3:12–13 (ESV)

“and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the *coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”*

2 Timothy 2:10–12 (ESV)

“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure*, we will also reign with him*;”

Revelation 20:6 (ESV)

“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, *and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”*

**--The Purposes of the Second Coming of Jesus.**

1. **To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the earth.**

**See Jude 15 above. Cf. Matt 24:29-24:46**

Luke 17:29-30 (NIV)

But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 (NIV)

and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

1. **To deliver the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Matthew 24:22 (NIV)

If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

Romans 11:26 (NIV)

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;

he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

27 And this is {[27] Or will be}my covenant with them

when I take away their sins." {[27] Isaiah 59:20,21; 27:9; Jer. 31:33,34}

Luke 21:28 (NIV)

When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

1. **To bring spiritual revival to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NIV)

"The time is coming," declares the LORD,

"when I will make a new covenant

with the house of Israel

and with the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant

I made with their forefathers

when I took them by the hand

to lead them out of Egypt,

because they broke my covenant,

though I was a husband to them,

 declares the LORD.

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel

after that time," declares the LORD.

"I will put my law in their minds

and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,

and they will be my people.

No longer will a man teach his neighbor,

or a man his brother, saying, `Know the LORD,'

because they will all know me,

from the least of them to the greatest,"

 declares the LORD.

"For I will forgive their wickedness

and will remember their sins no more."

Romans 11:26 (NIV)

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

27 And this is {[27] Or will be}my covenant with them

when I take away their sins." {[27] Isaiah 59:20,21; 27:9; Jer. 31:33,34}

1. **To re-establish the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ kingdom.**

Amos 9:11-12 (NIV)

"In that day I will restore

David's fallen tent.

I will repair its broken places,

restore its ruins,

and build it as it used to be,

so that they may possess the remnant of Edom

and all the nations that bear my name.”

declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Ezekiel 37:24-28 (NIV)

"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.

They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever.

I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.'"

Luke 1:31-33 (NIV)

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

**Other Views of the Millennial Kingdom**

1. **Covenantal/Historic Premillennialism**

Key Distinctives:

1. The Lord returns before the millennium.
2. The millennium may be 1000 years or simply a long duration of time.
3. The Old Testament prophecies to Israel do not tie to the New Testament teaching of the millennium in Revelation 20.
4. The nation of Israel does not have a prominent place in the Millennial Kingdom.
5. There is no sharp distinction between the church and Israel.
6. This view shares many similarities with Amillennialism.
7. Generally holds that the church will experience the Tribulation.
8. **Amillennialism.**

Key Distinctives:

1. The Lord Jesus literally returns and brings the eternal state of His people.
2. There will be no physical, literal reign of Christ on the earth. Jesus’ reign and kingdom is spiritual. There will be a millennium, but not an earthly one.
3. The millennial kingdom began when Jesus came to earth and will continue until the second coming. The present age between the first and second comings of Jesus is the fulfillment of the millennium, either in heaven or on earth. But there will be no more millennial kingdom than what we experience right now.
4. The millennial reign of Jesus is fulfilled right now in heaven as Christ reigns over the glorified saints OR the millennial reign of Jesus is fulfilled right now spiritually on the earth through the church.
5. Satan is already bound in the sense that his power is now severely limited in deceiving the nations and keeping them from the Gospel.
6. The nation of Israel has no future as a nation.
7. The world will grow worse and worse until Jesus comes again.
8. The church and Israel are one people of God, without any distinctions.
9. **Post-Millennialism**

Key Distinctives:

1. The Lord Jesus will return after the Millennium.
2. This is an optimistic view of the present age. It believes that the church of Jesus will eventually Christianize the world through the preaching of the Gospel. The church will succeed in bringing peace, righteousness and prosperity through the Gospel to the whole earth. Then, when the church has completed her mission to bring in the Kingdom, Jesus will return.
3. The Millennium will last for an undetermined amount of time.
4. There will be no physical, literal reign of Christ on the earth. Jesus’ reign and kingdom is spiritual. There will be a millennium, but not an earthly one.
5. The millennial kingdom either began when Jesus came to earth OR when the Gospel begins to succeed in its blessing. The millennium will continue until the second coming.
6. There will be a time of great evil right at the end of the Millennium and prior to Jesus’ return.
7. The nation of Israel has no future as a nation.
8. **Preterism**

Key Distinctives:

1. Most or all the prophecies regarding the second coming of Christ were fulfilled sometime in the past. Most refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD as the key reverence point.
2. Full preterists believe all the prophecies of the OT and NT have already been fulfilled. Partial preterists acknowledge some prophecies of the NT are yet to be fulfilled. For example, the bodily resurrection of the saints, the Second Coming of the Messiah, and the final judgments.
3. Matthew 24:34 is a key text for preterists.
4. The book of Revelation was written before 70 AD.

 --Session A: An Overview and Rebuttal of Other Major Views of Bible Prophecy

--Session B: The Church, the Nation of Israel and the Kingdom of God

**The Church, the Nation of Israel and the Kingdom of God**

**Introduction to the Kingdom of God**

Story of “What’s the name of this game anyway?” at gas station

The BIG question: What is the central theme of scripture? Of history? Of the future?

How do we derive a central theme?

1. The hermeneutical circle

2. Trial and error—test the statements against the major themes of scripture

What are some themes that you can think of that ought to be included in any statement of overall theme of the Bible?

3. The danger of “proving the premise”

Purpose of the Bible: God, Covenant, holiness of God, God, glory of God, God as Lord, promise, salvation, the person of Christ, redemption, instruction manual for followers of God, the narrative of creation, fall, redemption, glory . . .

Quotes of Waltke, Bright, Barker, and McClain

*God is establishing his kingship over a hostile world to establish his glory. The bond that unites the testaments is the sense of God's divine activity in revelatory history in progressively establishing his rule in heaven on earth from the creation of the cosmos (Genesis 1) to his creation of the new cosmos (Revelation 21-22).* (Bruce Waltke, *[An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0310218977/105-2586458-8874018?ie=UTF8&tag=bwanaasafiweb-20&linkCode=xm2&camp=1789&creativeASIN=0310218977),* p. 45)

 The Bible is one book. Had we to give that book a title, we might with justice call it ‘The Book of the Coming Kingdom of God.’ That is, indeed, its central theme everywhere.” (Bright, p. 197)

 God is asserting and establishing His kingdom or rule over all that He has created, thus bringing all creation, through the mediatorial work of His Son, into complete submission and order under His sovereignty in order to bring the highest possible glory to Himself. (Kenneth Barker, “False Dichotemies between the Testaments,” Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (25), p. 15, n. 36)

 In the Biblical doctrine of the Kingdom of God we have *the* Christian philosophy of history. Hence, to see clearly the many-sided nature and vast scope of this Kingdom will not only shed light on the purposes and ways of God but also give to men a better “understanding of the times.” (McClain, pp. 5-6)

(You are God Alone, and that’s just the way it is)

The kingdom of God is a topic largely ignored by systematic theologians (Grudem has one page devoted to it (pp. 863-4). This does not mean that it is unimportant. Rather, it is a topic that is so central and so complex that it can often be overlooked, since it is a difficult topic to embrace. Here are a couple of books that are helpful on the subject:

McClain, Alva J. The Greatness of the Kingdom, Moody Press, 1968. (McClain’s book has a number of flaws, but I recommend it as the best book on the subject yet written.)

4. A subject without a predicate??

A key question to ask if the central theme of scripture is the kingdom of God is: What about that kingdom? Does the Bible make a singular statement about that kingdom?

I believe that there is a statement which does the Bible’s content justice, aligns with other significant themes of scripture, and properly accounts for all periods of biblical history (ironically, some of biblical “history” is yet future!).

**Here is the statement:**

**GOD IS AT WORK AMONG PEOPLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE ALONE IS QUALIFIED TO BUILD HIS KINGDOM**

1. **General observations about the kingdom of God**
2. Definitions and distinctions

1) The definition of “kingdom” must be biblical

1. The whole of scripture must be examined, not just isolated passages
2. Luke 17:21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matthew 13:33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." Matthew 5-7
3. The method of study needed is Biblical Theology

--A study of various passages of the Bible to determine what the Bible says about a given subject

1. **Defining the kingdom of God**

**--The idea of kingdom carries with it three ideas:**

**--A ruler with authority and power**

**--A realm of subjects to be ruled**

 **--A rulership or the exercise of authority and power**

Of these, the most important idea is the ruler with authority.

It is VERY important not to reduce the concept of the kingdom of God to an abstraction. The liberal, emergent reimagining of the kingdom of God as:

1. Focused on now, not the future
2. Focused on everyone as citizens
3. Focused on ecological renewal and social justice

“We can as little have a reign with no kingdom as a kingdom without one who reigns.” Archibald Robertson

1. Some Biblical distinctions
2. Some passages present the Kingdom as something which has always existed, but in other places it seems to have had a definite historical beginning

Psalm 10:16 The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. Daniel 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

1. The Kingdom is described as universal in scope, i.e., nothing exists outside of it, but it is also described as a local rule established on earth

Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

Isaiah 24:26-27 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations.27For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

1. The Kingdom sometimes appears as the direct rule of God, with no intermediary between God and men, but it is also pictured as the rule of God through a mediator who serves as a channel between God and man

Psalm 59:13 consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob. Selah

Psalm 2:4-9-- The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.  5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 6 "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." 7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD : He said to me, "You are my Son ; today I have become your Father. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

1. The Kingdom of God is described as unconditional rule arising from God’s own sovereignty, but it is also described as a Kingdom based upon a covenant made by God and man

Daniel 4:35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

Psalm 89:27-29 I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. 28 I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. 29 I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure.

1. How do we explain these distinctions?
2. One kingdom with two aspects

--God universal general sovereignty and a theocratic rule

--God is already king and His kingship lies in the future (antimony)

--the kingdom is a victorious reality and a thing of the future

2) The biblical reconciliation of these perspectives includes:

a. It is not entirely wrong to speak of two kingdoms being revealed in the Bible (nor, as we shall see, three!)

b. We must not think that these “kingdoms” are absolutely distinct from one another either.

c. There is value in thinking of two or three phases of the one rule of our sovereign God.

d. The following terms best designate three aspects of God’s rule:

--Universal—the always realized but not always recognized rule of God

--Mediatorial (Messianic)—the administrative rule of God revealed imperfectly at first through Israel and ultimately will be revealed through the Messiah. (Benware uses the term, “theocratic” for this. Note that he also adds a fourth aspect of “spiritual kingdom” and fifth aspect called “millennial kingdom”)

--Ultimate (Ideal)—the future rule of God recognized by all

D. The Universal Kingdom of God-- the always realized but not always recognized rule of God

1. The Universal Kingdom exists without interruption throughout all time

Psalm 10:16--The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.

Psalm 29:3-5, 9-10  3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. 5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. 9 The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, "Glory!" 10 The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.

Psalm 74:12 But you, O God, are my king from of old; you bring salvation upon the earth.

Psalm 145:13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

Jeremiah 10:2-5, 10 This is what the LORD says: "Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them.  3 For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel.  4 They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter. 5 Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good."10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.

Lamentations 5:19 You, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation.

1. The Universal Kingdom includes all that exists

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. 12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

Psalm 103:19-22 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. 20 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. 21 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.  22 Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Psalm 139:7-10 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

Isaiah 37:16 "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

Jeremiah 10:7 Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you.

 --Divine rule in the universal kingdom is generally providential

Definition: Providential means divine control by secondary causes

Psalm 148:8 lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,

Psalm 29:3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap,
       but its every decision is from the LORD.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD;
       he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Isaiah 10:5 5 "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger,
       in whose hand is the club of my wrath!

Isaiah 44:28-45:5 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please;  he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." '

Question: What implications does this principle of God’s universal kingdom have for the upcoming election?

1. The Universal kingdom rules regardless of the attitudes of its subjects

Three general cases:

(1) Those who willingly perform God’s will

Psalm 103:20--Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.

(2) Those who unwillingly perform God’s will

John 11:47-53--Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. 48If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our placeand our nation." 49Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." 51He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, 52and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. 53So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

(3) Those who unwittingly perform God’s will

Proverbs 21:1--The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD;
he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

 (Note that the ultimate kingdom of God will eliminate #’s 2 and 3)

1. Mediatorial (Messianic)—the administrative rule of God revealed imperfectly at first through Israel and ultimately will be revealed through the Messiah.
2. Definition
3. The Mediatorial Kingdom has special reference to the human race, though it finally extends over all creation.
4. The rule of God is expressed through a divinely chosen representative who speaks and acts for God, but also represents the people before God.
5. This ruler is always a human being.
6. Outline of history of the mediatorial kingdom (see: <http://ewo.org/resources/sermons/series/what-the-bible-is-all-about/> )
7. Old Testament History—the imperfect expression of the mediatorial kingdom
8. Old Testament Prophecy—the future expression of the mediatorial kingdom which has near and far fulfillments
9. The Life of Christ—the character of the mediatorial kingdom as announced by Jesus
10. The early church—The already/not yet nature of the mediatorial kingdom
11. The present age—the mediatorial kingdom as it exists now
12. The millennial kingdom—the visible and established form of the mediatorial kingdom
13. The eternal kingdom—the convergence of the mediatorial kingdom and the ultimate kingdom of God
14. Consider the following statements:

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints discounts the notion of Original Sin and it ascribed negative impact on humanity . . . [W]e believe that we are not *born* sinners . . . In other words, we’re born good; we learn to sin as we grow older. . .

“Indeed, we honor and respect Adam and Eve for their wisdom and foresight. Their lives in the Garden of Eden were blissful and pleasant; choosing to leave that behind so they and the entire human family could experience both the triumphs and travails of mortality must not have been easy. But we believe they did choose mortality, and in so doing made possible for all of us to participate in the Heavenly Father’s great, eternal plan.” M. Russell Ballard, *Our Search for Happiness*, p. 87

“The decision of Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit was not a sin, as it is sometimes considered by other Christian churches. It was a transgression—an act that was formally prohibited but not inherently wrong.” *Preparing for Exaltation*, Lesson 3.

How do Mormons distort Adam’s (and then our own) role in the (mediatorial) kingdom of God?

1. A SIXTY MINUTE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

**1050 B. C. The Benjaminite monarchy:** **The premature unification of the nation**

A. Historical issue: The international vacuum and consequent rise of tribal unity (1 Sam 8:5, 19. 20). Israel needed a nationalistic movement similar to those of her neighbors.

B. Theological relevance: Saul’s monarchy was a negative and premature illustration of kingship and was doomed to fail.

**1000-930 B.C. The Davidic and Solomonic monarchy: Tribes to empire**

A. Historical issue: The death of Saul created a leadership vacuum in Israel and threatened to completely dissolve a tenuous tribal unity. David stepped into that vacuum and succeeded in overcoming political fragmentation, establishing national security, and expanding the influence and control of his monarchy far beyond its borders. His son, Solomon, greatly increased the splendor of the empire, but an unpopularly financed building program sowed the seeds of discontent among a segment of the populace.

B. Theological relevance: David’s rule established the messianic model because he fulfilled the divine aspirations for God’s kingdom, while Solomon’s rule extended it. David’s personal failures did not detract from the messianic model, but they did demonstrate that God alone is qualified to build His kingdom. Solomon’s failures significantly reduced messianic testimony.

**930- 880 B.C. The Battle for Benjamin: An unfortunate division of the nation.**

A. Historical issue: Following the secession of the northern tribes, the then separate kingdoms fought for control over what previously united them (Benjamin), and fell victim to the encroachment of other powers.

B. Theological relevance: The division of the kingdom reflected a failure to attain the messianic kingdom and resulted in an orientation of priorities away from God where Israel and Judah each became intent upon building their own individual kingdoms at each other’s expense.

**880-840 B.C. Israel and Judah in the mid-ninth century: An improper coalition of the nation**

A. Historical issue: As victims of encroaching external forces, Israel and Judah needed to shift the balance of power. Assyrian campaigns did not affect this policy.

B. Theological relevance: Israel and Judah’s realization that internal conflict hindered their own individual growth resulted in a treaty of expediency which compromised God’s ideal.

**840-750 B.C. The Respites from Assyria: The political reconstruction of the nation**

A. Historical issue: The kings of the divided monarchy saw the opportunity in the Assyrian advance under Adad-nirari III to escape Aramean oppression and recover.

B. Theological relevance: In the midst of local fragmentation, religious and spiritual compromise prevailed. Political deliverance was short lived in both north and south because of that compromise.

**750-690 B.C. The Days of Isaiah: A Tragic Decimation of the nation**

A. Historical issue: Local stability was disrupted as local powers scrambled to prepare for Assyria’s onslaught and Tiglath-Pileser III’s new policy of annexation.

B. Theological relevance: The question of ultimate reliance dominates: Do we trust other nations or the LORD?

**690-610 B.C. Judah alone: the ultimate condemnation of the nation**

A. Historical issue: During the golden age of Assyria, the Judean monarchy faced the uncertainty of how to respond to that great international power, but in Assyria’s decline, Judah’s rising hopes shifted to concern to gaining independence

B. Theological relevance: The monarchy’s attempts to maintain fidelity to God swung wildly between the poles of apostasy and obedience. But the prophetic message and response to the utter depravity of Manasseh stated that the monarchy would fall.

**610-586 B.C. The days of Jeremiah: The Final destruction of the nation**

A. Historical issue: A respite from Assyria allowed Judah to enjoy a brief resurgence, but this recovery was eradicated when Judah became entangled in the Egypto-Assyrian power play against Babylon. As Egypt and Babylon battled, Judean kings faced a difficult decision: How should they respond to the two dominating powers?

B. Theological relevance: Because Manasseh failed so miserably, the nation was doomed to failure and destruction. The fruits of judgment ripened: an obstinance of heart among the kings and an obscuring of truth by the “prophets”.

1. The Ultimate Kingdom of God
2. 1 Corinthians 15:23-28
3. Revelation 21-22



The Church and Its Relationship to the Kingdom of God

Mothers-in law—story of customs in Bolivia

1. The King preaches about His kingdom after He rises from the dead (Post-resurrection views of the kingdom)

[Acts 1:3](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:3&version=ESV) He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.
[Acts 1:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1:6&version=ESV) So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
(already and not yet aspects of the kingdom)

1. The Apostles preached about the kingdom of God and the way to enter it.
	1. Their preaching

[Acts 8:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+8:12&version=ESV) But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
Acts 14:18-23-- 21When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

[Acts 19:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+19:8&version=ESV) And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.
[Acts 20:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+20:25&version=ESV) And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.

Paul in Rome Acts 28--22But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." 23When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 24And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. 25And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: 26 "'Go to this people, and say, You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.27 For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' 28Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." 30He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

* 1. Entrance into the kingdom (or not!)

[1 Corinthians 6:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians+6:9&version=ESV)-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:16-23-- 19Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:1-8--Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 3But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

* 1. THE WAY TO ENTER THE KINGDOM IS BY FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE

Romans 3:21-27-- But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.

[Colossians 1:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1:13&version=ESV)-14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1. The kingdom of God and the church: A key question—What are the ways that the nation of Israel and the church are connected to the kingdom of God?

A. The glory of the body of Christ, the church (God does not dwell in a place but in a people)

Colossians 1:15-20-- 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

1. What is the plan for Israel? (Lots of stuff that we think is irrelevant but isn’t—it’s about God keeping His promises)

Romans 10:9-13—similarity in salvation-- because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 11:25-29—differences in time and how the kingdom will function-- Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

    "The Deliverer will come from Zion,
   he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";
27"and this will be my covenant with them
    when I take away their sins."

28As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. 29For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

C. The plan for the church—Ephesians 1:22-23-- And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

1) understand the Gospel (first half of epistles)

2) apply the Gospel (second half of epistles)

[1 Thessalonians 2:12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thessalonians+2:12&version=ESV)
we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

[James 2:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+2:5&version=ESV)
Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

D. The ministry of the Holy Spirit equips the church in how to live and how to reach the world

1) To equip the church in how to live—the issues that we deem so important are not nearly as important as we think, and the issue of relationship with God through Christ in the fullness of the Spirit is all-important

[Romans 14:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+14:17&version=ESV) For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

--Overcoming divisions (because even in the church people start building their own kingdoms) and serving the Lord in community together

[Colossians 4:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+4:11&version=ESV) and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.
First [Corinthians 4:20](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians+4:20&version=ESV) For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

1. To reach the world—the key difference in the disciples going from fearful to bold was the ministry of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8-- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

[Acts 17:6-7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+17:7&version=ESV) (Paul and Silas enter Europe in Acts 16)
And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus."

3) Faith in the person and work of Christ is the way to enter the kingdom of God.

[Hebrews 1:8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+1:8&version=ESV) But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.

E. The Gospel of Christ—the heart of everything—not just salvation

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (the Gospel); 19-25 (the means of entrance); 50-52 (God’s work in us)

15:50-52--I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

1. Living for Christ—see how Paul’s love for the kingdom of God reveals the way to live for Christ—not a salvation by works but a thankful heart

1 Timothy 6:11-16--But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

1. Communicating Christ

2 Timothy 4:1-5 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

1. Entering the kingdom of Christ—a very serious thing; there is no opt out—story of me in dorm at Illinois with guy on icy ledge

Hebrews 12:25-29-- See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. 26At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." 27This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29for our God is a consuming fire.

Really important because not entering the kingdom of Christ means eternal punishment

2 Thess. 1:5-9-- This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— 6since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

[2 Timothy 4:18](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Timothy+4:18&version=ESV)
The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**The Rapture of the Church and the Anti-Christ**

(Story on the airplane from La Paz, Bolivia to Miami just before 9/11)

I.              The Rapture of the Church

  A.   The meaning of the term “rapture”

The term rapture is derived from the Latin verb *rapere,* which means “to transport from one place to another”.  The term is used in the Latin Vulgate version of the New Testament in I Thess. 4:17 and is translated there “caught up.”

  B.      The Contrasts between the Rapture and the Second Coming

  1.     Translation of all believers vs. no translation.

2.     Translated believers go to heaven vs. translated believers return earth

3.     Earth not judged vs. earth judged and righteousness established

4.     Imminent vs. follows specific predicted signs (i.e. tribulation)

5.     Not in Old Testament vs. predicted often in OT

6.     Believers only vs. Affects all men

7.     Before the day of wrath vs. concluding the day of wrath

8.     No reference to Satan vs. Satan bound

  C.   The Various theories of the rapture

  1.     The Partial Rapture Theory

Only believers who are watching and waiting for the Lord will be raptured at various times before and during the seven-year Tribulation.  Those who are raptured are spiritually mature saints, both dead and living. Based on Matthew 24:45-51; 25:1-13; Luke 20:35; Revelation 2-3.

Problems:  1.  Believers experience God’s wrath for sin which undermines doctrine of grace.  2. This divides the body of Christ.  3.  I Thessalonians 5 comforts that this will not happen.  Rapture happens “together”.

  2.     The Mid-Tribulational Rapture Theory

The church is raptured in the middle of the tribulation period, prior to the Great Tribulation.  A key question is, “Who blows what trumpet when?” The Mid-tribulational position holds that the trump of 1 Thess 4:16 and the last trump of 1 Cor 15:52 are the same as the seventh trump of Rev 11:15ff.

Problems:  1.  Destroys the doctrine of immanency.  2.  The whole seven years is described as a time of God’s wrath.

  3.     The Post-Tribulational Rapture Theory

 The church will be raptured at the second coming of Christ, which will occur at the end of the Tribulation. Generally sees Rev. 20:4-5 is the spiritual “resurrection” of John 5:25. It misapplies Matthew 24:31 and 25:40 to the rapture and merges Israel and the Church through Revelation 6-19.

Problems:  1. Destroys the doctrine of immanency.  2.  Leaves unexplained how the millennium is populated with believers in physical state.

  4.     The Pre-Tribulational Rapture Theory

Jesus will first come for His saints, and then come with His saints.  The rapture of the church occurs before the Tribulation begins.

  D.   The Biblical support for the rapture

1.     The Rapture in the Old Testament

Some suggest: Isaiah 26:19 (NIV) But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. 20 Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. 21 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer.

Why might there not be biblical support for the Rapture in the OT?

2.     The Rapture in the Gospels

John 14:1 (NIV) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

3.     The Rapture in Paul’s epistles

1The 4:13 (NIV) Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

(Note:  The trumpet of the rapture:  In the Old Testament the trumpet was used for two purposes 1) to summon to battle and 2) to call to worship.  For the angels this trumpet is a summon to battle; for the believer this trumpet is a call to worship. Cf. Numbers 10:4)

Also note that Paul changes topics beginning in I Thessalonians 5.  This is not a passage that describes the rapture, but the tribulation and the second coming.

Titus 2:13 (NIV) while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

1Cor 15:51 (NIV) Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

(Note:  The term “mystery” refers to something that was previously unknown, but now is revealed.  Resurrection of the body was not “mystery” as it was clearly taught in the Old Testament (Job 19:25; Is 26:19; Dan 12:2).  But the Old Testament did not reveal that a number of people would go into God’s presence without experiencing death.  That is why the truth that “we shall not all sleep” is a mystery.

4.     The Rapture in Revelation

Reve 3:10 (NIV) Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

a. Jesus promises to protect His church from judgment designed for unbelievers.

1. There may indeed have been a local situation that Jesus is talking about here. “Telescope” perspective.
2. However, the cosmic scale of Jesus’ words suggests that Jesus is talking about something more than a local situation specific only to Philadelphia. Phrases like, “coming on the whole world” and “to try those who dwell on the earth” show this.
3. The “hour of trial” refers to a time of testing or tribulation that will be of rather short duration.
4. So, it seems that Jesus is talking about a time of tribulation for the whole earth, designed for trying those who are earth dwellers. He is talking about the great tribulation, that 7 year period of judgment on the earth described in Revelation 6-18.
5. Earth dwellers is an important term because that is who the tribulation is designed for. See 6:10;8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:2, 8—ESPECIALLY 13:8 *and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.; 17:8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*—if your name is in the Lamb’s Book of life you are not an earth dweller. This time of testing is NOT for you.
6. The phrase, “I will keep you from the hour of trial” is capable of two main meanings. One suggests that Jesus will preserve or keep His people in the midst of the trial. The other suggests that Jesus will keep His people out of the trial altogether. The combination of the verb with this particular preposition makes the view that the church is kept out of the tribulation a much stronger position. Story of a burning apartment—kept out of it vs. saved from within it. Jeremiah 30:7 *Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob;  yet he shall be saved out of it. This points to the fact that Israel will indeed be saved from within the tribulation but the church is kept out of it.*
7. Let’s keep in mind the purpose of the great tribulation. And let’s remember that this does not mean that the church will be kept from all tribulation. But the church will be kept from the great tribulation—“keep out of reach of children” on medicine bottles
8. Jesus promises to come soon so we should hold fast. “Soon” means suddenly, unexpectedly, without announcement.
9. \*\*The argument from silence in Revelation is particularly powerful.  In chapters 1-3, the church is mentioned by name 18 times.  The church does not appear again by name or reference from chapters 4 – 21 which cover the tribulation and the millennial reign.

E.    The participants of the rapture

1.     The Lord Jesus

2.     The archangel

a. Exodus 19:16-20 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. 17Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. 18Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. 19And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. 20The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.; Gal. 3:19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

b. Jude 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”

c. Daniel 12:1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

d. Revelation 12:7-9 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, 8but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

3.     The believers who have died.

4.     The believers who are still alive.

F.    The Purpose of the Rapture

1.     To judge and reward the church

2Cor 5:10 (NIV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1Cor 3:10 (NIV) By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

2.     To remove the one who restrains

2The 2:7 (NIV) For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.

  G.   The arguments supporting a pre-tribulational rapture of the church

  1.     The Doctrine of Immanency

James 5:7 (NIV) Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

Reve 22:12 (NIV) "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

Reve 22:20 (NIV) He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The hope of the return of Christ to take the saints to heaven is presented in John 14 as an immenent hope.  There is no teaching of an intervening event.  On this basis the disciples are exhorted to take comfort.  This is contrasted with the counsel of Jesus to those living in the tribulation to flee from persecutors (Matt 24:15-22).  The immanent return of Jesus is the expectation that believers are encouraged to wait for in I Thes 1:10 and Titus 2:13.   The call to look for Jesus’ return loses its significance if the tribulation must occur first.  The immanent return is the impetus for believers to purify themselves in I John 3:1-3.

The saints at Thessolonica had a clear view of the immanent return of Jesus as seen by their concern that those who died may miss out on the blessings of His return.  This same expectation of Christ’s immanent return is witnessed in many of the church fathers.  For instance, in the Didache (circa 120 A.D.) Christians are exhorted, “Watch for your life’s sake.  Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh.” (cf. Ante-Nicene Fathers, VII, 382)

2.     God’s Plan for the church

Reve 6:17 (NIV) For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

1The 1:10 (NIV) and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

1The 5:9 (NIV) For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note:  it is characteristic of God’s working to release his people before divine judgment is poured out on the world rather than to include them in it.  Cf. Noah, Lot, Rahab, Passover, etc. . .

  3.     The Nature of the Tribulation

The tribulation concerns Israel, not the church.  The tribulation is a prelude to Israel’s restoration in the millennial kingdom.  (cf. Deut 4:29-30; Jer 30:4-11;)  This is why none of the New Testament passages on the tribulation mentions the church (cf. Matt 13, 24; I Thes 5; 2 Thes 2 and Rev 4-18)

  4.     The specific promises of God to His church

Reve 3:10 (NIV) Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

1. (Note:  The promise is to keep the saints from the hour of trial, not just from trial.  The phrase “keep you from” is used only one other place in the New Testament in John 17:15 where Jesus prayed that believers would be kept from the evil one. 3:11 Hold fast so that no one will seize your crown. Some suggest that the pretribulational rapture view means that you will not care what happens to the earth, what happens in politics. The reasoning goes, “if you are going to exit, why would you care?” This is silly, since all of us, no matter our rapture view are going to die—exit--. In fact, Jesus makes the precise point that his pretribulational coming suddenly for His church comes with the command—hold fast. Be obedient/be vigilant/do not stop your engagement with this world. The crown spoken of here is not defined, certainly it is not defined as the crown of life mentioned to Smyrna. This crown is a crown of victory—victorious living. Do not lay down on your Master and allow your victorious life in Christ be seized away. The crown of victorious living can be taken away by our failures in combination with the evil hindering of others. Don’t let it happen.)

5.     The Removal of the restraining of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the church (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

In 2 Thessalonians 2 the Bible sets up an important chronological sequence.  Paul says the Day of the Lord cannot come until certain things happen.  One is that the man of sin must be revealed first.  But the man of sin cannot be revealed until something and someone is taken out of the way.  This restrainer must be one who is stronger than Satan himself. But be careful here—The restraining force of the Holy Spirit, via His indwelling of the church, does disappear, but His work does not. There is supernatural giftings and the occasional empowerments for service as in the OT (e.g., of the two witnesses), but there is also the ministry of the Spirit in regeneration/conversion and the work of the Spirit in Israel in the tribulation (see Ezek 39:29). So, there is less of the restraining of the Spirit via His indwelling of the church, but perhaps more variety of the Spirit’s activity that we generally see in the OT.

6.     The strong emphasis upon the church in Revelation 1-3 and the absence of the church in Revelation 4-18 during the vision of the Tribulation period.

7.     The necessity of an interval between the rapture and the establishment of the millennial kingdom.  (If premillenialism is assumed.)

a.     Intervening events in heaven  (cf. 2 Cor 5:10)

--Judgment seat of Christ

--Judgment of Gentiles following 2nd Coming indicates both saved and unsaved are still in their natural bodies right after the 2nd coming.  (Matthew 25)

b.    Intervening events on earth

--Believers left on earth at millennium in natural bodies.

2. The Antichrist

--Two extremes: 1) some don’t want anything said about these matters; 2) others talk too much about it.

--Reasons for discussing the Antichrist: 1) The Bible says a lot for us to understand; 2) World trends that point to the rise of the Antichrist.

--There are three key books: Daniel 7:8-26; 9:26-27; 11:36-45; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; and Rev. 13:1-10; 17:1-18 (some would want to include Isaiah 14:1-20 and 1 John 2, 4, and 2 John 7)

A. The term, “Anti-Christ”

 1) Against or in the place of?

 2) Usage in the NT

 1 John 2:18

 1 John 2:22

 1 John 4:3

 2 John 7

 B. Names applied to Antichrist

 1) Beast (Rev 13:1)

 2) Antichrist (1 John 2:18)

 3) Lawless one, man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2:3, 8)

 4) Another, in his own name (John 5:43)

 5) Worthless shepherd (Zech 11:15-17)

 6) Willful king (Dan 11:36)

 7) The prince who is to come (Dan 9:26)

 8) King of bold face (Dan 8:23)

 9) Little horn (Dan 7:8)

 10) Possible—dragon in the sea (Isa 27:1)

 C. Personality and genius

 1) Different from other men—Rev 13:4—Who is like the beast?; Dan 7:24 “different”

 2) High intelligence (Dan 7:8,20 “eyes”); Rev. 13:18

 3) Great orator (Dan 7:8, 20; Rev. 13:5)

 4) Crafty politician (Dan 9:27; 11:21; Rev. 17:12-13, 17)

 5) Commercial genius (Rev. 13:17)

 6) Military capability (Rev 13:4)

 7) The wonder of the world (Rev 13:3-4; 17:8)

 D. Religion and moral character

 1) Materialistic pantheist (Dan 11:38)

 2) Blasphemer (Dan 7:25; 11:36; Rev. 13:1, 5-6)

 3) Opponent to God’s law (2 Thess 2:3,8)

 4) Selfish ambition (Dan 11:36-37; 2 Thess 2:4)

 E. Origin of Antichrist

1) a Jew? Dan 11:37 (Elohim) John 5:43-- I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

2) From the Roman Empire Daniel 7:7-8—after them a little horn

3) The abyss—Rev 11:7; 16:13; 17:8

 F. Rise to world power

 1) immediate upon the rapture—2 Thess 2:7-8; Rev 6:1-2

2) What about the Temple Mount? Four possible answers—the beast will handle it; Israel will already be there; the 2 witnesses superintend it; God will work it out

3) Begins inconspicuously—Dan 7:8 “little” horn; Rev 6:1-2 went out conquering

4) Makes a treaty with Israel for seven years (Dan 9:27) Why? To get money? To obtain respect and trust?

5) Ruthlessly extends power (Dan 7:8, 20, 24)

6) Becomes the head of a confederacy of ten powers (Rev 13:1; 17:12-13)

7) Attacked by the kings of south and north and killed??? (Dan 11:40-43; Ezek. 38-39) (see also: Joel 2:20; Isa 10:12-27; Isa 14:25; Isa 30:31; Micah 5:5)

8) Becomes final “king of Babylon” and world ruler (Rev 13:7; 17-18)

 G. Means of Antichrist’s rise

 1) Chaotic world conditions (Matt 24:6-7; Rev 6:3-8)

 2) Great personal ability (Rev 13:3-4—who is like the beast?)

 3) Support of the Jewish nation (Dan 9:27)

 4) Influence of apostate Christendom (Rev 17:1-5)

 5) Satanic power (Rev 13:2)

 6) Divine providential control (Rev. 17:16-17)

 H. Brief chronology

 1) Beginning following rapture (2 Thess 2:7-8)

 2) Treaty with the Jews at beginning of 70th week (Dan 9:27)

 3) Height of power in middle of the 70th week (Rev 11:3-7)

 4) During the height of his power:

Deadly wound is healed (Rev 13:3, 12, 14)

 Breaks the Jewish treaty and stops temple sacrifices (Dan 9:27)

 Puts two witnesses to death (Rev 11:3-7)

 Set himself up in temple and demands worship (Rev 13:14-15)

 Worship becomes almost universal (Rev 13:8)

Since many Jews resist, he becomes their enemy (Dan 7:21-22, 25; Matt 24:15-21; Rev 13:5, 7)

Destroys the apostate church (Rev 17:16-17)

Reaches pinnacle of power—religious, economic, military (Rev 13:4, 8, 17)

 5) Consumed by the judgment of God

 City and commercial system destroyed in one hour (Rev 18:10, 17)

 Wars against Christ and loses (Rev 19:19-20)

 6) Tossed in the lake of fire (Rev 19:20)

7) Tormented there forever (Rev 20:10—which is why “destroy” does not mean annihilation)

**The Tribulation**

**Definition:** The time of God’s great and terrible wrath poured out upon rebellious man on this earth at the end of this present age lasting seven years.

**Three Key Texts relating to the Tribulation**

1. **Daniel 9**

Daniel 9:24-27 (ESV)

“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

1. **Revelation 6-18**

Revelation 6:1-2 (ESV)

“Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.”

Revelation 6:12–17 (ESV)

“When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?””

Revelation 8:1–2 (ESV)

“When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.”

Revelation 8:7 (ESV)

“The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.”

Revelation 9:19–21 (ESV)

“The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Revelation 16:1–3 (ESV)

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.”

1. **Matthew 24**

Matthew 24:15–22 (ESV)

“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

**Biblical Terms Denoting the Tribulation Period**

1. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tribulation**

Matthew 24:21 (ESV) (NIV has “distress.”)

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

Revelation 7:14 (ESV)

“I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’”

1. **The Day of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Zechariah 14:1–2 (ESV)

“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 shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”

Joel 2:29–32 (ESV)

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and **awesome day of the Lord comes**. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Joel 3:12–15 (ESV)

“Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.”

Isaiah 34:1-2, 8 (ESV)

“Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it. For the Lord is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter . . . “For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.”

Zephaniah 3:7–8 (ESV)

“Therefore wait for me,” declares the Lord, “for the day when I rise up to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.”

(This period is set apart from the day when man was allowed to go his own way. This phrase is used for a future time when the Lord intervenes to judge the rebellious nations, discipline Israel and establish the Messiah’s rule. Also this term is used more broadly to reference the events of the Lord’s coming and the millennial reign through to the last battle i.e. Zechariah 14:1-4 and 2 Peter 3:10)

1. **A Time of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Daniel 12:1 (ESV)

“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.”

Jeremiah 30:7 (ESV)

“Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it.”

1. **His \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Zephaniah 1:14–16 ESV)

“The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.”

Isaiah 26:19–21 (ESV)

“Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the fury has passed by. For behold, the Lord is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain.”

Revelation 6:16–17 (ESV)

“calling to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’”

Revelation 11:18 (ESV)

“The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

Revelation 14:20–15:1 (ESV)

“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.”

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (ESV)

“and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1. **Others**

**(The expressions “the 70th week,” “the latter years,” “the latter days,” “the time of the end,” “the end of the age,” and “the last days” are used to designate this time.)**

1. **The Nature of the Tribulation Period.**
	1. **A time of God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Zephaniah 1:13–17 (ESV)

“The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.”

**(While the tribulation will witness the wrath of Satan against Israel *Rev. 12:12-17* and the wrath of Satan’s agent against the saints *Rev. 13:7,* this day is a time of God’s wrath.)**

Revelation 14:7 (ESV)

“And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.””

Revelation 15:7 (ESV)

“And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever,”

* 1. **A time of great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and destruction**

Isaiah 2:19 (ESV)

“And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.”

Isaiah 24:1–3, 6 (ESV)

 “Behold, the Lord will empty the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered; for the Lord has spoken this word . . . “Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched, and few men are left.”

Joel 2:1–2 (ESV)

“Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.”

Amos 5:18–20 (ESV)

“Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?”

Revelation 6:15–17 (ESV)

“Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?””

1. **The Purposes of the Tribulation**
	1. **The Completion of the Age**

**Five times in the gospel of Matthew the word “end” appears. Cf. Matt 13:39-40, 49, 24:3; 28:20**

* 1. **The Revelation of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

2 Thessalonians 2:3–8 (ESV)

“Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God . . . For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.”

* 1. **Confirmation of Men in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Revelation 9:19–21 (ESV)

“The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”

Revelation 16:8–11 ESV)

“The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.”

* 1. **The Preparation of Jews and Gentiles**
		1. **The Jews for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Deuteronomy 4:25–31 (ESV)

“When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. . . . But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice. For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.”

Jeremiah 30:4–11 (ESV)

“These are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

“Thus says the Lord: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace. Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; **it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it.**

“And it shall come to pass in that day, declares the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and foreigners shall no more make a servant of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. “Then fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the Lord, nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with you to save you, declares the Lord; I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.” (

Malachi 4:5–6 (ESV)

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Romans 11:24–27 (ESV)

“Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers:a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

See also the 144,000 Jewish witnesses.

* + 1. **The Gentiles for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**In Rev. 7, the saving and sealing of the 144,000 Jews occurs first (vv 1-8), followed by the unnumbered multitude of Gentiles (vv 9-17). Rev. 14 records a similar order with the 144,000 in vv. 1-5 and the Gentile multitude in verse 6.**

Revelation 14:6–7 ESV)

“Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.””

* 1. **The judgment of God, especially upon the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Isaiah 34:2 (ESV)

“For the Lord is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter.”

Joel 3:12–17 (ESV)

“Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

“So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.”

1. **Key People of the Tribulation**
	1. **The Antichrist**

The term literally means “one who opposes or is against Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 (ESV)

“Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship**, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.”

Revelation 19:19 (ESV)

“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.” (

* 1. **The False Prophet – a religious leader who works to bring worship to the Anti-Christ by performing miracles (i.e. calling down fire from heaven).**

Revelation 13:11–18 (ESV)

“Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave,to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.”

Revelation 16:13–14 (ESV)

“And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.”

Revelation 19:20 (ESV)

“And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.”

Revelation 20:10 (ESV)

“and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

* 1. **The Two Witnesses. (Moses and Elijah?)**

Revelation 11:3 (ESV)

“And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Revelation 11:6–13 (ESV)

“They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pitwill make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

* 1. **The 144,000** – these are specially protected Jews who are left in the Tribulation period as servants of God. They minister for the Lord during the Tribulation, likely as witnesses to the salvation and mercy of the Lord.

Revelation 7:2–4 (ESV)

“Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed **the servants of our God** on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:”

Revelation 14:1–5 (ESV)

“Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.”

**Three Great Judgments**

**--The Judgment of Believers**

1 Corinthians 3:10–15 (ESV)

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”

2 Corinthians 5:9–10 (ESV)

“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

1 Corinthians 4:5 (ESV)

“Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.”

1 John 2:28–29 (ESV)

“And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.”

Romans 14:9–12 (ESV)

“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

Luke 14:12–14 (ESV)

“He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. **For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.””**

Revelation 19:6–8 (ESV)

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.”

**--The Judgment of Satan and the Angels**

2 Peter 2:3–4 (ESV)

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;”

Jude 1:6–7 ESV)

“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”

Revelation 20:10 ESV)

“and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

1 Corinthians 6:3 (ESV)

“Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!”

**--The Judgment of Unbelievers**

Revelation 20:11–15 (ESV)

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

John 5:22–29 (ESV)

“For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”