

From the Back of the Book

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The Order of Events

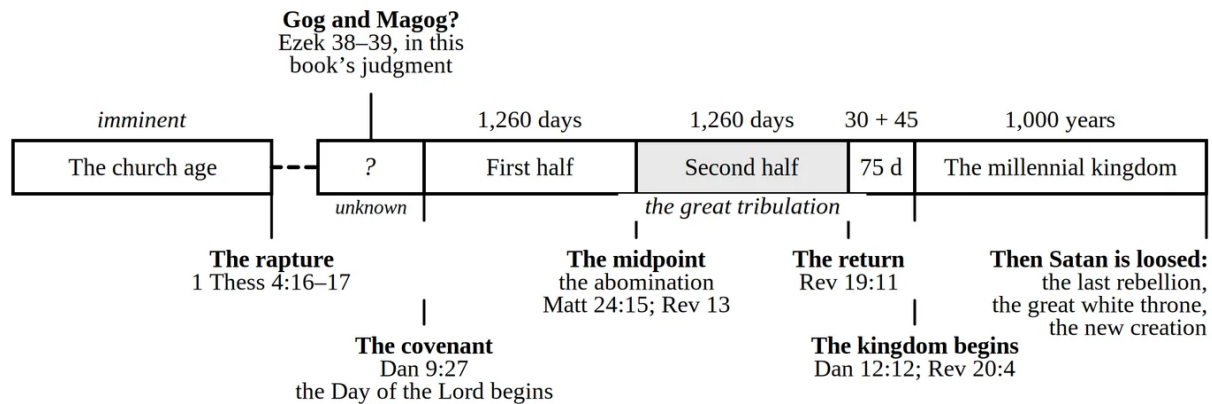


Figure 4. The road the book follows, from the church age to the new creation. Every count in Daniel and Revelation is measured from the covenant or the midpoint.

1. The church age. From Pentecost to the rapture. Israel scattered and regathered (1948, 1967); the signs converging (Chapters 2–7).
2. The rapture. The dead in Christ and the Old Testament saints raised; living believers caught up; no sign precedes it (Chapter 3).
3. In heaven. The judgment seat of Christ; the marriage of the Lamb begins (Chapters 1, 3, 8).
4. On earth. The Antichrist confirms a seven-year covenant with Israel; Daniel's seventieth week begins, and with it the Day of the Lord (Chapters 4, 5, 9, 14). The Psalm 83 war precedes this; Gog and Magog falls before or at the beginning, the timing debated (Chapter 9).
5. The first half—three and a half years. Seals one through four: false peace, war, famine, death. The temple rebuilt, sacrifices resumed; the two witnesses begin; the first martyrs (Chapters 8–11, 14).
6. The midpoint. The covenant broken; the abomination of desolation; war in heaven and Satan cast down; the religious Babylon destroyed by the ten kings; the mark enforced; Israel flees (Chapters 8, 9, 12–14).
7. The second half—the great tribulation, three and a half years, the great and terrible climax of the Day of the Lord. The fifth seal—the first of the great tribulation's martyrs under the altar—then the sixth seal; the 144,000 sealed while the four winds are held; the seventh seal; the seven trumpets; the two witnesses killed and raised; the seven bowls; commercial Babylon destroyed in one hour; the armies gathered to Armageddon (Chapters 8, 10–12, 16).
8. The second coming. Every eye sees Him; Israel looks on the One they pierced; Armageddon ended by the word of His mouth; the beast and false prophet cast alive into the lake of fire (Chapters 15, 16).

9. The interval—seventy-five days. Satan bound; the tribulation saints raised and joined to the bride; Israel judged in the wilderness; the nations judged; the marriage supper of the Lamb (Chapter 17).
10. The millennium—one thousand years. Christ reigns from Jerusalem; Israel the head of the nations; the temple and the healing river; peace, long life, creation restored (Chapter 17).
11. The end of the millennium. Satan loosed; the last rebellion; fire from heaven; Satan cast into the lake of fire (Chapter 18).
12. The great white throne. The unsaved dead raised and judged; death and Hell cast into the lake of fire; the old creation dissolved (Chapters 18–20).
13. The new heavens and the new earth. The New Jerusalem; God dwells with men; no more death (Chapter 21).

A Note on Method

The method stated in the Prologue has consequences, and the book does not hide them. Read literally, the promises to Israel are promises to Israel; the seventy weeks are weeks of years; the thousand years are a thousand years; the church is caught up before the wrath falls. The names for those conclusions are dispensational, premillennial, and pretribulational, and this book wears them. They are where a consistent literal reading leads, and the reader who follows the same method through the same texts can test whether it leads there.

What “Dispensational” Means

The word deserves a plain definition, since the book has claimed it. A dispensation is an administration—a way God has ordered His dealings with man during a particular stretch of history. The English word translates the Greek *oikonomia*, the management of a household (Eph 1:10; 3:2), and the idea is simply that God has run His house differently at different times. Before the fall He dealt with Adam one way; after the flood, with Noah, another; with Abraham by promise; with Israel by the Law; with the church by grace; and in the kingdom to come, by the visible rule of the King. Seven such administrations are usually counted—innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom—though the number matters far less than the principle. The way of salvation never changes: it has always been by grace through faith, from Abel to the last soul saved in the millennium. What changes is what God has revealed and what He has required.

Two convictions follow from reading Scripture this way, and they shape every chapter that follows. The first is that the promises God made to Israel belong to Israel—a real people, a real land, a real throne—and will be kept to the letter. The second is that the church is not Israel: it is a body that began at Pentecost and will end at the rapture, with its own calling and its own destiny, and the prophecies addressed to the nation are not to be reassigned to it. Charles Ryrie, who did more than anyone to define the system, reduced it to three essentials: a consistent distinction between Israel and the church, a consistently literal reading of Scripture, and the glory of God, rather than salvation alone, as the purpose of history.¹ Hold those convictions and read the text literally, and the outline of this book follows almost by itself. That is what “dispensational” means here, and it is the whole of what it means.

Why Read Prophecy Literally? Six Lines of Evidence

The method stated in the Prologue is not arbitrary, and the reasons for it are gathered here.

1. The first coming was fulfilled literally. Bethlehem was a town (Mic 5:2), the virgin was a virgin (Isa 7:14), the donkey was a donkey (Zech 9:9), the pierced hands were pierced (Ps 22:16), the thirty pieces of silver were counted (Zech 11:12–13). Every prophecy of the first coming that has been fulfilled was fulfilled in its plain sense. The prophecies of the second coming were written by the same prophets in the same way.
2. The unbelievers read it literally, and they were right. When Herod asked where Christ should be born, the scribes answered from Micah, and Herod sent soldiers to Bethlehem—not to a symbol (Matt 2:4–6, 16). The plain sense was so plain that a pagan king could act on it.

3. Jesus and the apostles read the Old Testament literally. They took Adam, Noah, Jonah, and the manna as history (Matt 19:4–5; 24:37; 12:40; Jn 6:31), the land as land, and the throne of David as a throne (Lk 1:32–33; Acts 2:30). When they applied a text in a new way, they said so, and they never denied its first sense.
4. The text tells the reader when it is using a figure. “...The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks... are the seven churches” —Rev 1:20. Scripture explains its own symbols. Where it does not, the burden is on the interpreter to show why the words should not mean what they say.
5. Allegory has no brakes. Once a text can mean something other than what it says, it can mean anything, and the interpreter becomes the authority instead of the text. The history of allegorical interpretation is a history of every reader finding his own theology in every verse. Literal reading is not the safe method because it is easy; it is the safe method because it is checkable.
6. The consistent literal reader arrives at the same place. Read the promises to Abraham, David, and Israel in their plain sense, count Daniel’s weeks as weeks of years, and take Revelation 20’s thousand years as a thousand years, and the outline of this book follows. The method does not produce the system by accident. The system is what the text says when it is allowed to.

The Same Rule at the Front of the Bible

This book holds that creation took place about 4004 B.C., speaks of the flood as history, and counts the age of the earth in thousands of years, and it does so without stopping to argue the point. That is not an oversight; it is the same rule applied at the other end of the Bible. A book that insists Revelation means what it says has no standing to read Genesis 1–11 as something other than what it says. The days of creation are numbered, bounded by evening and morning, and treated as ordinary days by the fourth commandment: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day...” —Ex 20:11. The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 give a father’s age at the birth of his son, generation by generation, from Adam to Abraham, and they exist to be added; Luke adds them, tracing the Lord’s line back to Adam, “...which was the son of God” —Lk 3:38, as history and not as parable. Jesus placed the first couple “...from the beginning of the creation...” —Mk 10:6, not billions of years after it. Paul built the gospel on a real first man through whom “...sin entered into the world, and death by sin...” —Rom 5:12, which leaves no room for death before Adam. And Peter, warning of the last days, made the flood the pattern for the coming judgment and said the scoffers of the last days would be “...willingly...ignorant...” —2 Pet 3:5 of exactly that history.

The other readings should be named, and one of them is in-house. The day-age view, held today most ably by Hugh Ross, takes the six days as six long ages, so that the earth can be as old as the geologists say; the gap theory, printed in the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909 and taught in many dispensational pulpits since, puts the ages between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, in a ruined earth before the six days; and the framework view takes the days as a literary arrangement rather than a sequence at all.² The book answers all three with the same texts. A day bounded by “...the evening and the morning...” —Gen 1:5 and numbered is a day, and the fourth commandment rests the week on six of them (Ex 20:11); a gap cannot hold the death of ages before Adam when Paul says death came by his sin (Rom 5:12); and a framework cannot be added up, when the genealogies exist to be added. None of this settles every question a curious reader may bring, and the book does not pretend it does. The age of the earth is a large subject with its own literature, and the reader who wants the fuller case, from the text and from

the created world, will find it made carefully at Answers in Genesis (answersingenesis.org), which is listed among the resources at the back. What this appendix means to say is narrower: the young earth in this book is not an extra doctrine bolted on to prophecy. It is what a literal, grammatical, historical reading yields when it is turned toward the first chapters of the Bible, and a reader who applies that reading to Revelation 20 and refuses it to Genesis 1 is using two rules where the book uses one.

Four Ways to Read Revelation

Revelation has been read in four ways, and this book reads it in one of them. Each of the four has been held by believers who love the Lord and honor His Word, and each should be described as its holders would describe it before it is answered. What follows is that description, and then the reasons—from the text, not from tradition—that this book holds the last of them.

The Preterist Reading

Preterism (from the Latin *praeteritus*, “gone by”) holds that most or all of Revelation was fulfilled in the first century—chiefly in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. On this reading the beast is Nero, Babylon is Jerusalem, the tribulation is the Jewish war, and the coming of Christ in the clouds is His coming in judgment on the city through the Roman armies. Its strongest texts are the book’s own time-words: John writes of “things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev 1:1) and “the time is at hand” (Rev 1:3), and Jesus said “this generation shall not pass” (Matt 24:34). Preterists take those words seriously, and they are right to. Its holders include able and godly scholars, and its full form—which says every prophecy is already fulfilled, including the second coming—was condemned as heresy by the church long ago; its partial form, which leaves the second coming and the final judgment still future, is held today by respected Reformed teachers.³

The reading fails at the text in three places. First, the events do not match. No sun went black, no third of mankind died, no beast ruled the whole earth and made every nation take his mark, and no one saw the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory in A.D. 70; the fall of Jerusalem was a catastrophe, but it was a local one, and Revelation is not. Second, the time-words do not mean what preterism needs them to mean. “Shortly” (*en tachei*) describes the manner of the events when they come—suddenly, in rapid succession—not their distance from John; the same word is used of things that are still unfulfilled two thousand years later (Rom 16:20), and Peter warns in so many words that the delay of the promise is not slackness but patience (2 Pet 3:8–9). Third, and decisively, the date. If Revelation was written after A.D. 70, preterism has nothing to be fulfilled in, and the earliest testimony of the church places the book under Domitian, a quarter century after the city fell. That evidence is set out below.

The Historicist Reading

Historicism holds that Revelation is a map of church history from John’s day to the end—the seals, trumpets, and bowls unfolding across the centuries, with the barbarian invasions, the rise of Islam, the papacy, and the Reformation all found in its pages. This was the reading of most of the Reformers and of the great Protestant commentaries down to the nineteenth century, and it explains why the Westminster divines could call the pope “that antichrist”: they read the beast and the harlot as the Roman church across a thousand years.⁴ Its strength is

that it takes the book as real prophecy of real events. Its weakness is that no two historicists have ever agreed on the map. The identifications shift with every century, each generation placing itself at the sixth seal or the fifth trumpet, and a prophecy that means something different to every reader has stopped functioning as prophecy. It also requires the “days” of the book to be years—1,260 days becoming 1,260 years—by a rule Scripture never states, and it has almost no room for the seven-year period that Daniel’s seventieth week requires. Almost no one holds it today, and its collapse is instructive: it fell not because it took Revelation literally, but because it did not.

The Idealist Reading

Idealism holds that Revelation is not a timeline at all but a theology in pictures—the timeless conflict between God and evil, the church and the world, drawn in symbols that apply to every age and predict no particular event. On this reading the beast is every persecuting power, Babylon is worldliness in every century, and the millennium is the reign of Christ in the hearts of His people now. It is held mostly with amillennialism, and its classic statement is William Hendriksen’s, whose reading of Revelation as seven parallel pictures of the whole church age has been the Reformed textbook since 1939; its strength is real: Revelation does speak to every generation, and its pictures of the church under pressure have comforted believers in every century.⁵ But the book does not present itself as a set of timeless pictures. It presents itself as prophecy—“the things which shall be hereafter” (Rev 1:19)—with numbered sequences, measured periods, named places, and a sworn oath from an angel that “there should be time no longer” (Rev 10:6). It counts days. It names the Euphrates and Jerusalem and Megiddo. A vision that measures the New Jerusalem to the furlong and counts the tribes to the thousand is not offering an idea. Idealism keeps the book’s comfort and loses its content, and a reader who takes the seventy weeks as literal weeks has no consistent way to take the thousand years as a metaphor.

The Futurist Reading

Futurism holds that Revelation 1–3 addresses John’s own day and the church age, and that everything from chapter 4 onward describes events still to come: a seven-year tribulation, a personal Antichrist, a literal return of Christ, a thousand-year kingdom, a final judgment, and a new creation. It is the reading of this book, and of the dispensational tradition generally.⁶ It has one strength that the other three lack: it lets the text say what it says. When Revelation counts 1,260 days, futurism counts 1,260 days; when it names Jerusalem, futurism goes to Jerusalem; when it says every eye shall see Him, futurism expects every eye to see Him. Its critics answer that this is naïve, that apocalyptic literature is symbolic by nature and cannot be read like a newspaper. The answer is that Revelation tells the reader when it is using a symbol—the seven stars are the seven angels, the seven candlesticks are the seven churches (Rev 1:20), the waters are peoples (Rev 17:15), the woman is the great city (Rev 17:18)—and where it does not say so, the burden is on the interpreter to show why the plain sense should not stand. Futurism is also the oldest reading, and the clearest witness should be quoted rather than summarized. Irenaeus, writing about A.D. 180, two generations after John and taught by men who had known him, wrote: “But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom.”⁷ A personal Antichrist, a literal three and a half years, a temple in Jerusalem, a visible return in the

clouds, a lake of fire, and a kingdom after it. That is the futurist outline, entire, in one sentence, seventeen hundred years before anyone had heard of Darby. Justin Martyr and Hippolytus expected the same things, and the other readings came later, each to solve a problem futurism does not have.⁸

The Objection from Genre

One objection stands behind the other three and deserves its own hearing, because it comes from outside the discussion the chapters have been having. It is not that a particular verse has been misread. It is that the whole method is a category error: apocalyptic is a recognized genre of ancient literature, with its own conventions, and the books in it—Daniel, 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, the Apocalypse of Abraham—traffic in beasts, numbers, cosmic upheaval, and heavenly journeys that no ancient reader took as reportage. On that view, asking whether the locusts of Revelation 9 are helicopters is like asking what a parable's characters ate for breakfast: a question the form does not answer, because the form was never making that kind of claim.

The objection has real force and should not be waved away with the word liberal. Four things answer it.

First, Revelation does not present itself as apocalyptic in that sense. It calls itself a prophecy and pronounces a blessing on the man who keeps "...the sayings of the prophecy of this book" —Rev 22:7. The other works in the genre are pseudonymous, written under a borrowed ancient name; John signs his own, writes to seven congregations that could have written back, and tells them what is coming upon them. That is a prophet writing to a church, not an apocalypticist writing under a dead man's name.

Second, the genre argument proves too much. Daniel is in the same category, and Daniel's prophecies of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome came to pass in the plain sense of the words, as Chapter 4 shows. So did the prophecies of the first coming, which no one today calls a genre error. If apocalyptic language never refers to real events in the order given, then a virgin did not conceive, Bethlehem was a symbol, and the thirty pieces of silver were a literary flourish. Nobody holds that.

Third, the book supplies its own key, which the other works in the genre do not. It says the seven stars are the angels of the churches and the seven candlesticks the churches themselves (Rev 1:20), the waters are peoples (Rev 17:15), and the great dragon is "...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan..." —Rev 12:9. A book that stops to explain its symbols is telling the reader that the rest is not in that class, and where it does not stop, the burden lies on the interpreter to show why the plain sense should not stand.

Fourth, and this is the practical point, the genre objection has no stopping place. Once symbolic-by-nature is granted as the default, no principle halts it before the resurrection of the body, the return of Christ, or the judgment, and in the history of interpretation it has not halted there. The method that keeps 1,260 days as 1,260 days is the same method that keeps the empty tomb empty. That is not naïveté. It is consistency, and it is the only protection a reader has against a text that can be made to mean whatever his age requires of it.

When Revelation Was Written

The date of the book settles the first of these debates by itself, so the evidence should be laid out. The preterist reading requires Revelation to have been written before A.D. 70, usually under Nero (A.D. 54–68); its case rests on Revelation 11:1–2, where John is told to measure a temple that seems to be standing, and on Revelation

17:10, where “five are fallen, and one is”—which, counted from Julius Caesar or Augustus, can be made to land on Nero or Galba. Those are real arguments and deserve a real answer. The temple John measures is the tribulation temple, which the same passage says the Gentiles will tread down for forty-two months—a period that does not fit the Jewish war, which lasted four years and ended in the temple’s destruction, not its measurement. And the seven kings of Revelation 17:10, as Chapter 13 shows, are seven kingdoms, not seven Caesars; the count of emperors has never produced agreement even among those who use it, since no two lists start at the same man or decide the same way about the three emperors of A.D. 69.

Against that stands the testimony of the men who were closest to John. Irenaeus, who was taught by Polycarp, who was taught by John, wrote that the vision “was seen not very long ago, but almost in our own generation, toward the end of the reign of Domitian.”⁹ Domitian reigned from A.D. 81 to 96; the book therefore belongs to about A.D. 95. Eusebius records that John was banished to Patmos under Domitian and released on the emperor’s death, which is exactly the situation Revelation 1:9 describes.¹⁰ Clement of Alexandria and Origen speak of John’s exile under “the tyrant” and his return after the tyrant’s death, which fits Domitian, and Victorinus names Domitian outright; no writer of the first four centuries places the book under Nero. The internal evidence agrees. The seven churches of chapters 2 and 3 are settled, established, and in some cases declining—Ephesus has lost its first love, Sardis has a name that it lives and is dead, Laodicea is rich and lukewarm—which describes congregations decades old, not the young churches of the sixties. Laodicea in particular was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60 and rebuilt at its own expense; a letter calling it rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing (Rev 3:17) fits the proud rebuilt city of the nineties, not the rubble of the sixties. And the persecution John writes from is the pressure to worship the emperor that grew under Domitian, who took the title “Lord and God,” and that Nero never organized. The late date is the date of the evidence, and it leaves preterism with a fulfillment that happened twenty-five years before the prophecy was given.

Where This Book Differs from Its Own Tradition

A reader who knows the dispensational literature will notice that this book departs from its mainstream in a few places, and honesty requires listing them in one place. On each, the book has given its reasons in the chapter where the question arises; on each, the mainstream view is held by men whose work this book relies on; and on each, a reader who keeps the mainstream view loses nothing else in the book.

1. The bride of the Lamb. This book: the redeemed of all ages, with Israel’s saints and the tribulation martyrs joined to the church. Mainstream: the church alone, with Israel as the wife of Jehovah and the guest of the supper (Chapters 8 and 17).
2. The resurrection of the Old Testament saints. This book: at the rapture. Mainstream: at the second coming, with the tribulation martyrs (Chapter 3).
3. The fifth seal. This book: weeks or months into the great tribulation, its martyrs the first victims of the mark. Many: the midpoint, or the first half (Chapter 8).

4. The two witnesses. This book: two men of this present age, either kept back when the church is caught up or saved just after, anointed with the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah, offered as a theory. Mainstream: Moses and Elijah, or Enoch and Elijah (Chapter 10).
5. Gog and Magog. This book: after the rapture and before the covenant, offered as a judgment. The tradition: divided among several placements (Chapter 9).
6. The Day of the Lord. This book: used without qualification, the term means the seven years, beginning when the man of sin is revealed by the covenant he confirms; in its widest sense it runs on through the kingdom to the passing of the heavens. The tradition: divided on where the day begins, many starting it at the rapture itself (Chapter 5).

Notes

1. Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), the chapter on the essentials of dispensationalism, revised as *Dispensationalism* (1995, 2007). The three are summarized here rather than quoted.
2. Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004); C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909), notes on Genesis 1:1–2. The reader should know that the gap theory was the common view of the book's own tradition for much of the twentieth century, and that this book departs from it.
3. For partial preterism, see R. C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), and Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989). Full preterism, which denies a future return of Christ, is rejected in Scripture itself (2 Tim 2:17–18) and was rejected by the church after it.
4. The classic historicist commentary is E. B. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*, 4 vols. (London: Seeley, 1844); for the Westminster divines, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), 25.6.
5. The standard idealist treatment is William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1940); see also Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, which combines idealist and futurist elements.
6. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*; Pentecost, *Things to Come*; Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*.
7. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.30.4, trans. Roberts and Donaldson (Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1). Irenaeus was a hearer of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. For the same expectation in his contemporaries see Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 80–81, and Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*. It should be said plainly that none of these men taught a pretribulational rapture; what they show is that a literal, future reading of prophecy is the oldest one, not that the early church held every position this book holds.
8. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.25–36; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 80–81; Hippolytus, *On Christ and Antichrist*. Papias, a hearer of John, is reported by Irenaeus (5.33.3–4) to have taught a literal earthly kingdom.
9. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.30.3.
10. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.18–20, 23.

Tables for Reference

Three sets of tables gather in one place what the chapters treat in sequence: the judgments, the resurrections, and the views this book weighs. Each row points to the chapter where the matter is argued from the text.

The Judgments

Judgment	When	Who is judged	Basis	Outcome	Scripture; Chapter
The judgment seat of Christ (the bema)	In heaven, after the rapture, before the marriage of the Lamb	Believers of the church age (and, in this book, the Old Testament saints raised with them)	Works done after salvation, tested by fire; not salvation itself	Reward given or withheld; the believer is saved regardless	2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:11–15; Rom 14:10; Ch. 3, 8
The judgment of Israel	At the return, in the seventy-five days before the kingdom	Jews who survive the tribulation in natural bodies	Faith in the Messiah they have now seen	Believers enter the land and the kingdom; rebels are purged and do not enter	Ezek 20:33–38; Zech 12:10; Ch. 17
The judgment of the nations (sheep and goats)	At the return, in the seventy-five days before the kingdom	Gentiles who survive the tribulation in natural bodies	Treatment of the King's brethren during the tribulation, as the evidence of faith	Sheep enter the kingdom in mortal bodies; goats go into everlasting punishment	Matt 25:31–46; Joel 3:2; Ch. 17
The great white throne	After the thousand years and the final rebellion	The unsaved dead of all ages, raised for judgment	The books of works, and the book of life in which their names are not found	The second death: the lake of fire, forever	Rev 20:11–15; Ch. 19, 20

The Resurrections

“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” —1 Cor 15:23. The first resurrection is one harvest gathered in stages; the second is a single event a thousand years later (see Figure 7, below).

Stage	When	Who is raised	Scripture; Chapter
Christ, the firstfruits	A.D. 33, the third day	Christ alone, with the saints of Matthew 27:52–53 as a sign	1 Cor 15:20–23; Matt 27:52–53; Ch. 1
The church at the rapture	Before the tribulation, at an hour no one knows	The dead in Christ, then the living changed; in this book, the Old Testament saints with them	1 Thess 4:16–17; 1 Cor 15:51–52; Dan 12:2; Ch. 3
The two witnesses	Three and a half days after their death, in the second half of the tribulation	The two witnesses	Rev 11:11–12; Ch. 10
The tribulation saints	At the return, before the kingdom	Those martyred under the beast, and the rest of the tribulation dead who believed	Rev 20:4–6; Ch. 15, 17
The unsaved dead	After the thousand years	Every unbeliever of every age, for the great white throne	Rev 20:5, 12–13; Jn 5:29; Dan 12:2; Ch. 19

Figure 7. The resurrections in order. The first resurrection is completed at the return; the second comes a thousand years later, for judgment.

Views of the Rapture

View	What it holds	Where this book answers it
Pretribulational (this book)	The church is caught up before Daniel's seventieth week begins; imminent, with no sign required	Chapter 3, "The Case in Full: Ten Lines of Evidence"
Midtribulational	The church is caught up at the midpoint, before the great tribulation, often at the seventh trumpet	Chapter 3, "The Other Views of the Rapture"
Pre-wrath	The church endures the first part of the tribulation and is removed before the bowls, when God's wrath proper begins	Chapter 3, "The Other Views of the Rapture"; Chapter 8 on the seals as the Lamb's wrath
Posttribulational	The church is caught up at the return and comes straight back down with Christ; one event, not two	Chapter 3, "The Rapture and the Second Coming Side by Side"; Chapter 15
Partial rapture	Only watchful or faithful believers are taken; the rest go through the tribulation	Chapter 3; Chapter 22 on salvation as a gift, not a reward

Views of the Millennium

View	What it holds	Where this book answers it
Premillennial (this book)	Christ returns bodily before a literal thousand-year reign on this earth, with Israel restored	Chapter 17; Chapter 15
Amillennial	There is no future earthly kingdom; the thousand years are the present church age, Satan bound at the cross, the promises to Israel fulfilled in the church	Chapter 17, "The Other Views"; Chapter 2 on Israel; Appendix B
Postmillennial	The gospel gradually Christianizes the world, producing a golden age, after which Christ returns	Chapter 17, "The Other Views"; Chapter 5 on the last days as days of apostasy, not progress

The Seven Blessings of Revelation

Seven times Revelation pronounces a blessing. Read together they are the book's own summary of what it asks of its reader: read it, keep it, watch, die in the Lord if it comes to that, and come to the supper.

	Text	The blessing	What it asks
1	Rev 1:3	"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein..."	Read and keep it
2	Rev 14:13	"...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth..."	Die in the Lord
3	Rev 16:15	"...Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments..."	Watch
4	Rev 19:9	"...Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb..."	Come to the supper
5	Rev 20:6	"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection..."	Share the first resurrection
6	Rev 22:7	"...blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book"	Keep the sayings
7	Rev 22:14	"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life..."	Do His commandments

Schools of Interpretation

School	What it holds	Where this book answers it
Futurist (this book)	Revelation 4–22 describes events still future, to be read as literally as the rest of Scripture	Prologue, "How This Book Reads Scripture"; Appendix B
Preterist	Most or all of Revelation was fulfilled in the first century, chiefly in A.D. 70	Appendix B, "When Revelation Was Written"; Chapter 17
Historicist	Revelation charts the whole course of church history from John's day to the end	Appendix B; the failed date-setting of Chapter 5
Idealist	Revelation is a timeless picture of the conflict between good and evil, not a sequence of events	Prologue; Appendix B

Hard Questions

These are the questions a study leader is asked most often, gathered where they can be found. Each is answered from the text as far as the text goes, and no further; where the answer is an inference, it is called one.

What happens to children at the rapture?

Scripture does not answer this question in a single verse, and the reader should know that up front. What it does give is the character of the Judge and a consistent pattern in how He treats those too young to know good from evil. When David's infant son died, David stopped mourning and said, "...I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" — 2 Sam 12:23, a confidence in reunion that makes no sense unless the child was with the Lord. When Israel's adults were barred from the land for unbelief, God exempted "...your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil..." — Deut 1:39. God spared Nineveh in part for its "...sixscore thousand [a hundred and twenty thousand] persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand..." — Jon 4:11. And Jesus said of little children, "...of such is the kingdom of heaven" — Matt 19:14.

Every child is born a sinner (Rom 5:12), so this is not innocence. It is grace applied to those who cannot yet refuse it, on the merit of the same cross that saves the rest of us. On that pattern, this book holds that children below the age of understanding will be taken at the rapture with the church, and it labels the position what it is: an inference drawn from the character of God, not a text. "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" — Gen 18:25. He will, and no parent will find Him less merciful than they hoped.

What about people who have never heard the gospel?

Paul answers this in Romans, and his answer runs in two directions. No one is without light: "...the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" — Rom 1:20, and the law is "...written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness..." — Rom 2:15. Every man has enough light to know there is a God, to know he has sinned against Him, and to seek Him; and the pattern of Scripture is that God sends more light to the one who responds to what he has, as He sent Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10). Judgment is measured by the light received: the servant who knew his lord's will and disobeyed is "...beaten with many stripes..." and the one who knew not, "...with few stripes..." — Lk 12:47–48.

But the other direction is the one Paul actually emphasizes. "...how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" — Rom 10:14. Scripture never says that ignorance saves, and it never offers a second road; it says God "...now commandeth all men every where to repent" — Acts 17:30, and it says the answer to the man who has not heard is a man who will go and tell him. The question is real, and God will judge every man justly by the light he had. But the church was not given the question to speculate on. It was given a commission.

Can people be saved after the rapture?

Yes, and in great numbers. John saw “...a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues...” and was told, “...These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” —Rev 7:9, 14. The two witnesses and the 144,000 (see Chapter 10) and the angel with the everlasting gospel (Rev 14:6) are all preaching after the church is gone, and the tribulation will produce the largest harvest of souls in history.

The harder question is whether those who heard the gospel and refused it before the rapture can believe after it. Paul says of those who follow the Antichrist that “...they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” —2 Thess 2:10–11. Many teachers read this as a door closed on everyone who rejected Christ before the rapture. The text does not say that. It says the delusion falls on those who refused the truth and “...had pleasure in unrighteousness” —2 Thess 2:12, and it does not fix the moment of that refusal. This book will not narrow what God has left open, and it will not widen it either. What it will say is this: no one should plan to believe later. The man who hears the gospel today and puts it off is the man Paul is describing, and the one sure way to be saved after the rapture is to be saved before it.

Can someone who takes the mark of the beast be saved?

No. This is one of the few questions in this book where Scripture gives a flat answer without qualification. “...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God... and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone... And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” —Rev 14:9–11. There is no exception clause, and none should be invented.

The reason is what the mark is. It is not a barcode or a chip taken by accident; it is the outward seal of an inward act of worship, an oath of allegiance to a man who has declared himself God. Those who take it are those “...whose names are not written in the book of life...” —Rev 13:8. Scripture speaks of it as a settled thing because it is one. This is also why no believer needs to fear taking it unknowingly: it cannot be received without knowing exactly whose it is.

Why does God allow the tribulation at all?

Because He said He would, and because it accomplishes things nothing else will. Daniel was told what the seventy weeks were for: “...to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...” —Dan 9:24. The tribulation is the seventieth of those weeks, the last of the years determined upon Israel, and it ends with the nation looking on the One they pierced and being saved (Zech 12:10; Rom 11:26). It is also judgment on a world that has had the gospel for two thousand years and hated it: “And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity...” —Isa 13:11. And it is a trial of everyone left on the earth: “...the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” —Rev 3:10.

None of this is God losing control. Every seal is opened by the Lamb, every trumpet is sounded on command, every bowl is poured out from His temple. The tribulation is the end of the age of grace being written in the same hand that wrote the beginning, and the same hand that keeps the church out of it (see Chapter 3). And even then, its purpose is mercy as much as wrath: the great multitude of Revelation 7 would never have come to Him any other way.

Is the rapture in the Old Testament?

Not as a doctrine. Paul introduced it as something new: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” — 1 Cor 15:51, and a mystery in Paul’s vocabulary is a truth hidden in earlier ages and now revealed (Eph 3:4–5; Col 1:26). The church itself is such a mystery, and so is its departure. A reader who goes looking for the rapture in the prophets will not find it stated, because it was not given to them to state.

What the Old Testament does have is patterns, and the reader should hold them as patterns. Enoch “...was not; for God took him” — Gen 5:24, and Elijah was carried up alive without dying; both were removed before judgment fell on others. Isaiah puts a resurrection and a hiding in sequence: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise...” and then, “...Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” — Isa 26:19–20. That is the shape of the rapture, resurrection followed by shelter until the wrath is past, whether or not Isaiah understood it as one. God hid the doctrine and left the shape in plain sight.

Will people marry and have families in the kingdom?

Two groups live in the kingdom, and the answer is different for each. The resurrected saints do not marry; Jesus settled that: “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” — Matt 22:30. But the kingdom is also populated by mortals, the believers who came through the tribulation in natural bodies and entered it at the judgment of the sheep (see Chapter 17). They marry, and they have children. Isaiah describes a land where an infant no longer dies in its first days and where the people “...shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them” — Isa 65:23 (see also Isa 65:20), and Zechariah saw the city “...full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof” — Zech 8:5.

Those children are born as every child has been born since Adam, sinners in need of a Savior, and the kingdom does not change that. They must be born again like anyone else, under the best conditions the world has ever known: Satan bound, the King visible, the truth taught in every nation. That is why a rebellion is still possible when Satan is loosed at the end of the thousand years (Rev 20:7–8). The population that follows him is not resurrected saints; it is the unbelieving children and grandchildren of the mortals who entered, and their fall is the last proof that the problem was never the environment. It was the heart (see Chapter 18).

Where Each Passage Is Treated

This book is arranged by subject rather than by passage, which suits a reader working through it from front to back and frustrates one who arrives holding an open Bible. This appendix is for the second reader. It lists the chapters of Revelation and the prophetic chapters of Daniel in order, says in a line what each contains, and points to the place in this book where it is handled. Where a passage is treated in more than one place, the fullest treatment is listed first.

Revelation

Revelation 1 — The vision of the glorified Christ; the threefold outline of the book → Chapter 1, About Jesus; Chapter 3, on Rev 1:19

Revelation 2–3 — The letters to the seven churches; Philadelphia and the hour of trial → Chapter 6, The Laodicean Church; Chapter 3, The Hope: The Rapture of the Church

Revelation 4–5 — The throne, the elders, and the Lamb who takes the scroll → Chapter 8, What Happens in Heaven; Chapter 3, The Rapture Described

Revelation 6 — The first six seals → Chapter 8, The Seals; Chapter 11, The Sixth Seal; Chapter 14, on the rider of the first seal

Revelation 7 — The 144,000 sealed; the great multitude out of the tribulation → Chapter 8, The Fifth Seal; Chapter 10, The 144,000

Revelation 8 — The seventh seal, the censer, and the first four trumpets → Chapter 8, The Seventh Seal and How the Judgments Are Structured; Chapter 11

Revelation 9 — The fifth and sixth trumpets; the abyss and the army at the Euphrates → Chapter 8, The Sixth Trumpet; Chapter 14, The Four Angels at the Euphrates

Revelation 10 — The mighty angel, the little book, and the seven thunders → Chapter 8, The Seven Thunders

Revelation 11 — The two witnesses, their death and resurrection; the seventh trumpet → Chapter 10, What the Bible Says; Chapter 8, The Seventh Trumpet

Revelation 12 — The woman, the dragon, and the war in heaven at the midpoint → Chapter 8, The Midpoint; Chapter 7, The Nature and Character of the Enemy

Revelation 13 — The beast from the sea, the beast from the earth, and the mark → Chapter 13 entire; Chapter 14, The False Prophet

Revelation 14 — The 144,000 on Zion, the three angels, and the harvest and vintage → Chapter 10, The 144,000; Chapter 16, The Enemy Defeated

Revelation 15 — The sea of glass and the song of Moses and the Lamb → Chapter 8, before the bowls

Revelation 16 — The seven bowls and the gathering at Armageddon → Chapter 11, The Bowls; Chapter 16, Armageddon

Revelation 17 — The harlot, the beast she rides, the seven heads and ten horns → Chapter 12, The Religious System and Where Is Babylon?; Chapter 13, The Seven Heads

Revelation 18 — The fall of commercial Babylon in one hour → Chapter 12, The Economic System and The Fall of Babylon

Revelation 19 — Heaven opens; the marriage supper; the return of the King → Chapter 15, Heaven Opens; Chapter 8, The Marriage of the Lamb

Revelation 20 — Satan bound, the thousand years, the last rebellion, the great white throne → Chapter 17; Chapter 18; Chapter 19

Revelation 21 — The new heaven and new earth; the city and her measurements → Chapter 21, Our Eternal Home and The City

Revelation 22 — The river, the tree of life, the invitation, and the warning → Chapter 21, The River of Life and the Tree of Life; Chapter 22

Daniel

Daniel 2 — Nebuchadnezzar's image and the stone cut without hands → Chapter 4, The Four Empires and The Final Empire and the Stone

Daniel 7 — The four beasts, the little horn, and the Son of man → Chapter 4, Daniel's Four Beasts; Chapter 13, The Ten Horns

Daniel 8 — The ram, the goat, and the little horn out of the four → Chapter 4, The Four Empires; Chapter 14, on Antiochus as a type

Daniel 9 — The seventy weeks, the decree, the cutting off, and the covenant → Chapter 4 entire; Chapter 2, A Kingdom Divided and Exiled

Daniel 11 — The kings of north and south; the willful king → Chapter 14; Chapter 13, The Ten Horns

Daniel 12 — The time of trouble, the resurrection, and the 1,290 and 1,335 days → Chapter 3, The Old Testament Hope of Resurrection; Chapter 17, Between the Return and the Kingdom

Other Passages a Reader Is Most Likely to Look Up

Ezekiel 38–39 — Gog and Magog → Chapter 9, The War of Gog and Magog

Ezekiel 40–48 — The millennial temple, the prince, and the river → Chapter 17, The Temple of the Kingdom

Matthew 24–25 — The Olivet Discourse → Chapter 3, The Olivet Discourse; Chapter 5

Zechariah 12–14 — Israel's mourning, the return to Olivet, and the kingdom → Chapter 15; Chapter 17

1 Thessalonians 4–5 — The rapture and the day of the Lord → Chapter 3

2 Thessalonians 2 — The restrainer, the falling away, and the man of sin → Chapter 3; Chapter 14

1 Corinthians 15 — The resurrection body and the last trump → Chapter 3, A New Body

Genesis 6 — The sons of God, the Nephilim, and the flood → Chapter 6, As in the Days of Noah

Psalms 83 — The confederacy against Israel → Chapter 9, The Psalm 83 War

Isaiah 13–14; Jeremiah 50–51 — The fall of Babylon → Chapter 12, Where Is Babylon?

Seven Marks of a False Teacher

Scripture gives believers the tools to identify deception. The following seven marks are drawn from patterns found throughout the New Testament. They are not an exhaustive, infallible checklist; they are a rule of thumb, a practical framework for discernment. No single mark in isolation necessarily condemns a person, and some faithful teachers may trigger a flag in one area while being sound in all others. But when multiple marks appear together in a sustained pattern, the warning signs should not be ignored. Jesus said: “Ye shall know them by their fruits...” —Matt 7:16. These seven marks are the fruit to look for.

1. **Examine their source of authority.** A faithful teacher submits to Scripture as the final authority. They teach what the text says—verse by verse, book by book. The Word drives the teaching. A false teacher uses Scripture as a springboard for their own ideas or bypasses it in favor of experience—a dream, a personal revelation, a “God told me”—treated as an authority that Scripture must bend to. When someone claims ongoing, extra-biblical revelation that functions as a parallel authority alongside or above Scripture, they have left the foundation the apostles laid (Eph 2:20). The test: does the man serve the text, or does the text serve the man?
2. **Examine their gospel.** A faithful teacher holds to salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone—nothing added, nothing subtracted. A false teacher adds to the gospel or takes from it. Some add works, sacraments, speaking in tongues, tithing, or submission to a specific leader as conditions of salvation. Others subtract from it—removing the reality of sin, eliminating the existence of Hell, or denying the exclusivity of Christ. Paul drew the line as sharply as it can be drawn: “...If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” —Gal 1:9. The test: is anything added to or subtracted from faith alone in Christ alone?
3. **Examine their fruit over time.** A faithful teacher demonstrates consistent character across years and decades, not perfection, but a sustained pattern of integrity. A false teacher shows a gap between public profession and private conduct. They preach sexual purity while living in secret sin. They preach generosity while hoarding wealth. They preach humility while building personal empires. Jesus said: “...every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” —Matt 7:17. The test: does the fruit match the profession over time, not a single snapshot but a sustained pattern?
4. **Examine their accountability.** A faithful teacher is accountable to a local church, a body of elders, or a structure that can correct, rebuke, and if necessary remove them. A false teacher resists accountability. They build governance structures that protect them from oversight. They surround themselves with loyalists who will not challenge them. When the man is the ministry and cannot be questioned, the conditions for abuse are already in place. The test: can this person be corrected or removed by someone with authority over them? “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...” —Heb 13:17.
5. **Follow the money.** A faithful teacher does not build personal wealth on the backs of their congregation. A false teacher consistently monetizes the ministry—branded products, luxury lifestyles, private jets, mansions, and salaries hidden from the people who fund them. They teach that financial giving to their ministry guarantees financial blessing from God—a transactional gospel that exploits the poor and the desperate. Paul warned: “...

they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare [trap], and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition [utter ruin]” — 1 Tim 6:9. The test: is the teacher getting rich from the ministry?

6. Watch how they respond to correction. A faithful teacher receives criticism, examines it against Scripture, and adjusts where needed. A false teacher attacks the critic. They label discernment as a “religious spirit.” They weaponize “touch not God’s anointed” to deflect legitimate biblical scrutiny. They accuse those who question them of lacking faith or being divisive. Proverbs draws the distinction plainly: “...rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee” — Prov 9:8. The test: when corrected, does the person examine themselves or attack the corrector?

7. Examine what they produce. A faithful teacher produces disciples who know their Bibles—people who can open the Word, read it, understand it, and apply it to their lives. A false teacher produces followers who know the teacher. The congregation can quote the pastor’s books but cannot find Habakkuk. They know the latest sermon series but cannot articulate the gospel. They are loyal to a personality, not to Christ. The test: do the people under this teacher’s ministry know the Word of God, or do they know the teacher?

The men who bear these marks come in the three kinds described in Chapter 12, false prophets, false teachers, and worthless shepherds, and the marks are the same for all three.

Every one of these individuals will stand before God and give an account for everything they have said and done, especially what they have said and done in His name. Jesus issued a devastating warning: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven... Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity [wickedness]” — Matt 7:21–23. They used His name. They performed in His name. And He will say He never knew them. James warned: “My brethren, be not many masters [teachers], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation [stricter judgment]” — Jas 3:1. The stricter judgment is coming. And no platform, no following, no book deal, and no amount of applause will shield them from it.

Glossary of Terms and of KJV Words

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used in this book and may be unfamiliar. The definitions are the book's own and are meant to be plain. Old words from the King James text are defined separately in the Glossary of KJV Terms that follows.

abomination of desolation — The act foretold by Daniel and Jesus in which the Antichrist sets himself up in the rebuilt temple to be worshiped, at the midpoint of the tribulation.

Abrahamic covenant — God's promise to Abraham of a land, a nation, and a blessing for the whole world (Genesis 12; 15), made by God alone and never withdrawn.

aionios — Greek: everlasting; the word used of both eternal life and eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46).

aliyah — Hebrew: "going up"; a Jew moving to the land of Israel.

allegorize — To treat a text as a picture of something else instead of taking its plain meaning.

amillennialism — The view that the thousand years of Revelation 20 are a symbol of the present age, not a future reign of Christ on earth.

Antichrist — The world ruler of the tribulation, empowered by Satan, who makes a covenant with Israel, breaks it, demands worship, and is destroyed at Christ's return.

apocalyptic — Having to do with the end of the world; also a kind of writing, like Revelation, that uses visions and symbols.

apostasia — Greek: "falling away" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3; a defection, its only other New Testament use being of Jews who "forsake Moses" (Acts 21:21).

apostasy — Falling away from the faith once held.

apostle — One sent with authority; the twelve chosen by Jesus, and Paul.

Armageddon — The gathering of the world's armies in the valley of Megiddo in northern Israel for the final battle against Christ.

ascension — Jesus' visible return to heaven forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1).

atonement — The covering and removal of sin by a sacrifice; Christ's death on the cross.

autonomy — Self-rule; deciding for oneself.

Babylon — The ancient city on the Euphrates; in this book, also the false religious, political, and commercial system that began at Babel and returns at the end.

bema — Greek: a raised platform or judgment seat; the place where Christ rewards believers for their service (2 Corinthians 5:10).

bride of Christ — The redeemed of all ages, united to Christ; the church is part of it, joined by the Old Testament saints and the tribulation martyrs.

canon — The list of books God inspired; the Bible.

catastrophic — Causing great disaster.

charagma — Greek: “mark” in Revelation 13:16; a stamp, brand, or official seal, the badge of an owner on a slave or the stamp that made a document valid.

church — In this book, the body of believers from Pentecost to the rapture, distinct from Israel.

church age — The period from Pentecost to the rapture.

coalition — A group of nations acting together.

comeliness — attractiveness; good looks

consummation — Completion; the final bringing together.

counterfeit — A fake made to look real.

covenant — A binding agreement; God’s covenants are His sworn promises.

Davidic covenant — God’s promise to David that his descendant would reign on his throne forever (2 Samuel 7), fulfilled in Jesus.

Day of Christ — The rapture, and what follows it in heaven for the church (Phil 1:10). In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, where the King James also reads “the day of Christ,” the context is the Day of the Lord (see Chapter 3).

Day of the Lord — In this book, Daniel’s seventieth week, the whole seven years, beginning with the covenant. In its widest biblical sense the term runs on through the kingdom to the passing of the heavens (Zech 14; 2 Pet 3:10).

decree — An official order.

demons — Fallen angels who follow Satan; called devils in the King James Version.

desolation — A state of ruin and emptiness.

dispensation — An administration; a way God has ordered His dealings with man during a stretch of history.

dispensational — Reading the Bible as a series of such administrations, taking prophecy literally, and keeping Israel and the church distinct.

doctrine — Teaching; what the Bible teaches on a subject.

dominion — Rule; the right to govern.

ecumenical — Seeking to unite different churches or religions.

eisegesis — Reading into a text what one already believes.

ekklesia — Greek: assembly; the word translated “church.”

eschatology — The study of last things; the doctrine of the end times.

eternal state — The new heavens and new earth after the millennium and the final judgment; eternity.

exegesis — Drawing out of a text what is actually there.

exile — Being forced to live away from one's homeland.

False Prophet — The second beast of Revelation 13, a religious leader who directs the world to worship the Antichrist.

first resurrection — The raising of all the saved, in stages: Christ the firstfruits, the rapture, the two witnesses, and Christ's return for the tribulation martyrs.

futurist — One who reads Revelation 4–22 as still future; the reading of this book.

Gentiles — All people who are not Jews.

geopolitical — Having to do with nations and their power.

glorified body — The resurrection body, like Christ's, that believers receive at the rapture.

Gog and Magog — The leader and land of the northern coalition that invades Israel in Ezekiel 38–39; also the name given to the last rebellion after the millennium (Revelation 20:8).

grace — God's undeserved favor; salvation as a gift, not a wage.

great tribulation — The second half of the tribulation, three and a half years of unequaled trouble (Matthew 24:21).

great white throne — The final judgment of the unsaved dead after the millennium (Revelation 20:11–15).

Hades — Greek: the place of the dead; "hell" in the King James Version. For the lost, a holding place until the great white throne.

hadith — Sayings and deeds attributed to Muhammad, collected after his death.

harpazō — Greek: "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17; the source of the word rapture.

Hasmoneans — The Jewish dynasty that ruled an independent Judea between the Maccabees and Rome.

hermeneutics — The rules by which a text is interpreted.

historicist — One who reads Revelation as a map of church history.

hyperinflation — Money losing its value very fast.

idealist — One who reads Revelation as timeless symbols rather than as events.

idolatry — Worship of anything other than God.

imminence — Being able to happen at any moment, with nothing that must come first.

immutable — Unchanging.

inference — A conclusion reached by reasoning from what a text says, rather than something the text says directly.

infrastructure — The basic systems a society runs on: roads, power, water, communications.

intercession — Praying or pleading on another's behalf.

Israel — The nation descended from Jacob; God's covenant people, distinct from the church.

jizya — The tax Islamic law imposes on non-Muslims under Muslim rule.

judgment seat of Christ — See bema.

justification — God declaring a sinner righteous on the basis of faith in Christ.

lake of fire — The final and eternal place of punishment for Satan, his angels, and the lost (Revelation 20:10–15).

lawlessness — Living without regard for God's law.

listed — pleased; wished

literal interpretation — Taking words in their ordinary sense unless the text itself shows a figure of speech.

Lucifer — The name the King James text gives, following the Latin, in Isaiah 14:12, to the fallen angel who became Satan.

Mahdi — The deliverer expected in Islamic teaching to rule the world at the end.

manifestation — A showing; something made plain to see.

mark of the beast — The mark required in the right hand or forehead to buy or sell under the Antichrist (Revelation 13:16–18).

martyr — One who is killed for his faith.

mediator — One who stands between two parties to bring them together.

Messiah — Hebrew: “anointed one”; the promised King and Savior of Israel. Christ is the Greek form.

mid-tribulational — Holding that the rapture comes at the midpoint of the tribulation.

midpoint — The middle of the seven-year tribulation, when the Antichrist breaks the covenant and the great tribulation begins.

millennium — The thousand-year reign of Christ on earth (Revelation 20).

mystery — In the Bible, a truth once hidden and now revealed, not something unknowable.

nephesh — Hebrew: soul or life; the word for the living creatures of Genesis 1, never used of plants.

Nephilim — The giants of Genesis 6, the offspring of fallen angels and human women, on this book's reading.

new covenant — The covenant God promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31, ratified in Christ's blood, whose spiritual blessings the church shares now.

olethros — Greek: ruin or destruction; the word in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, which need not mean ceasing to exist, and in Paul’s usage does not.

Olivet Discourse — Jesus’ teaching on the end times, given on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24–25).

omnipresent — Present everywhere at once.

pantheism — The belief that God is everything and everything is God.

paradise — The place of the righteous dead; since the resurrection of Christ, in heaven.

Pentecost — The day the Holy Spirit came and the church began (Acts 2).

perdition — Destruction; ruin.

persecution — Being harmed or killed for one’s faith.

pestilence — Deadly disease spreading widely.

pharmakeia — Greek: sorcery; the root of the English word pharmacy.

post-tribulational — Holding that the rapture comes at the end of the tribulation, together with the second coming.

postmillennialism — The view that Christ returns after a golden age brought about by the spread of the gospel.

pre-wrath — Holding that the rapture comes at the sixth seal, before the trumpets and bowls.

precedent — An earlier example that sets the pattern.

premillennialism — The view that Christ returns before the thousand years and reigns on earth; the view of this book.

preterist — One who reads Revelation as mostly fulfilled in the first century.

pretribulational — Holding that the rapture comes before the tribulation; the view of this book.

projection — A description of what something may be like, reasoned from the text and from history; not itself Scripture.

prophecy — God’s foretelling of the future through His prophets; also His message through them.

protoevangelium — Latin: “the first gospel”; the promise in Genesis 3:15 that the woman’s seed would bruise the serpent’s head.

Qur’an — The book of Islam.

rapture — The catching up of living believers, with the resurrected dead in Christ, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

reconvergence — Coming back together after being scattered.

redemption — Buying back; Christ’s purchase of sinners by His blood.

regeneration — The new birth; also, the renewal of the earth in the kingdom (Matthew 19:28).

relativism — The belief that there is no fixed truth and each person decides for himself.

remnant — The faithful few who remain.

replacement theology — The teaching that the church has replaced Israel and inherited her promises; rejected in this book.

Restrainer — The one who holds back lawlessness until the rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:6–7); in this book, the Holy Spirit working through the church.

resurrection — The raising of the dead to bodily life.

Satan — The adversary; the fallen angel who leads the rebellion against God.

scoffer — One who mocks.

seals, trumpets, bowls — The three series of seven judgments in Revelation 6–16.

second coming — Christ's visible, bodily return to earth at the end of the tribulation.

second death — The lake of fire; eternal separation from God (Revelation 20:14).

secular — Without reference to God.

seventieth week — The final seven years of Daniel's seventy weeks (Daniel 9:24–27); the tribulation.

Shekinah — The visible glory of God, as in the cloud and the fire.

Sheol — Hebrew: the place of the dead; see Hades.

shofar — A ram's-horn trumpet.

sleight — trickery; sly dealing

sovereignty — God's complete rule over all things.

speculation — A guess about what may be, beyond what the text says; labeled as such in this book.

stoicheia — Greek: elements; the basic building blocks of the physical world (2 Peter 3:10).

syncretism — Blending different religions into one.

telescoping — The way the seventh seal contains the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet contains the seven bowls.

theocracy — Rule by God.

totalitarian — A government that controls every part of life.

transcendent — Above and beyond creation.

tribulation — The seven-year period from the Antichrist's covenant with Israel to the second coming; Daniel's seventieth week.

two witnesses — God's two prophets in Jerusalem during the tribulation (Revelation 11).

typology — The study of types—persons, events, or things in the Old Testament that picture Christ or His work.

tyranny — Cruel and oppressive rule.

unprecedented — Never having happened before.

unregenerate — Not born again.

vindicate — To prove right.

wrath — God's settled anger against sin.

Glossary of KJV Terms

The following terms appear in the King James Version quotations throughout this book. Modern equivalents are provided for readers less familiar with KJV language. These definitions also appear inline in the text in square brackets ([like this]) where each term first occurs in a chapter. The definitions follow the sense of the Hebrew or Greek word behind the English as given in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and the standard lexicons at blueletterbible.org, checked against the Oxford English Dictionary for what the word meant to the translators of 1611.

abide — remain; continue

abomination — something deeply offensive to God

affrighted — terrified

arrayed — dressed; clothed

asp — cobra; poisonous snake

asunder — apart; in pieces (Heb 4:12).

athirst — thirsty

balances — scales

bare — bore; carried

beguiled — deceived; tricked

beseech — to urge; to beg earnestly (2 Thess 2:1).

bondage — slavery

bondmen — slaves

bowels — the inward parts; the seat of feeling (Ps 22:14).

brake — broke

brethren — brothers

brimstone — burning sulfur

builded — built

candle — lamp; light

candlesticks — lampstands

causeth — causes

censer — incense container

charity — love; the word the King James uses for the Greek agapē (1 Cor 13:1).

chasteneth — disciplines; corrects as a father corrects a son

cleave — to cling or bond together (Dan 2:43); also to split apart (Zech 14:4)

cockatrice — a viper; a venomous serpent

cockcrowing — the rooster’s crowing; the hours before dawn

commendeth — demonstrates

compassed — surrounded

consent — accord; agreement (“with one consent”)

consolation — comfort; firm encouragement

consummation — final end; completion

conversation — conduct; way of life; in Philippians 3:20, citizenship

corruptible — perishable; able to decay

covetous / covetousness — greedy / greed

craft — deceit; cunning

creature — creation; created thing

damnable — destructive

darkly — dimly; obscurely

decease — departure; death

delicacies — luxuries

despisers — haters

devils — demons

devoureth — consumes; devours

disannul — invalidate; cancel

divers — various; many different

divination — fortune-telling

doctrine — teaching

dominion — ruling authority

dumb — mute; unable to speak

earnest — guarantee; down payment; (of expectation) eager

edify — build up; strengthen

effeminate — a man who takes a woman's role, in the sexual sense of 1 Corinthians 6:9.

Elias — Elijah

emulations — jealousy

envyings — jealousies

ephah — a measuring basket

equity — fairness; justice

erred — wandered; strayed

escheweth — shuns; turns away from

espoused — betrothed; promised in marriage (2 Cor 11:2).

fatling — fattened animal

feigned — fabricated; false

fenced — fortified

fervent — intense; burning

forasmuch — because; since

former sea / **hinder sea** — the Dead Sea (east) and the Mediterranean (west)

fowls — birds

fulness — fullness

glass — mirror

gnashing — grinding; clenching

go to — come; come now (Gen 11:4).

godhead — the divine nature; deity

grafted — grafted

graven — carved; cut into stone or wood (Judg 18:30).

grievous — severe; fierce; painful

guile — deceit; cunning

gulf — chasm; great gap

habitation — dwelling place

harlots — prostitutes

hart — a deer

hath — has (*appears throughout*)

heady — reckless

heathen — the nations; unbelieving peoples

heresies — divisive false teachings

highminded — conceited; puffed up

hireling — a hired hand

hither — here; to this place

holpen — helped

Holy Ghost — the Holy Spirit; “ghost” is the older English word for spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

imagination — thoughts; reasonings

immutability — unchangeableness

immutable — unchangeable

incontinent — without self-control

incorruptible / **incorruption** — imperishable; unable to decay

indignation — fierce anger; wrath

iniquity — wickedness; lawlessness

instantly — earnestly; with urgency, not “at once” (Acts 26:7).

intercession — pleading on another’s behalf

jacinth — a deep blue gemstone

justified — declared righteous

kid — a young goat

kindreds — tribes; clans

languish — waste away; grow weak

lasciviousness — sensuality; unrestrained immorality

letteth — restrains; holds back

longsuffering — patience; patient

lust — desire (not only sexual)

magnify — exalt; make great

manifest — revealed; made known

mansions — dwelling places

marvellous — astonishing

master — teacher

meat — food

meek — humble; gentle

meet — fitting; suitable

midst — middle

miry — wet; muddy

narrowly — closely; carefully

nigh — near

Noe — Noah

noisome — harmful; foul

oblation — offering; sacrifice

omnipotent — all-powerful

ordinances — regulations; decrees

overcometh — conquers; overcomes

overspreading — overwhelming flood

partakers — sharers; participants

pastors — shepherds

patience — endurance (not merely waiting)

perdition — destruction; eternal ruin

perfect — complete; mature; fully trained

perilous — dangerous

pestilences — plagues; deadly diseases

plowshares — farming blades

princes — rulers

principalities — ruling authorities; spiritual powers

privily — secretly

proceedeth — comes forth

pruninghooks — pruning hooks; farming blades

quarters — corners; regions (“the four quarters of the earth”)

quick — living; alive, as in “the quick and the dead” (2 Tim 4:1); keen, as in “quick understanding” (Isa 11:3).

quickened — made alive

raiment — clothing

recompence — repayment; penalty

regeneration — the renewal of all things (Matt 19:28)

reins — the innermost parts; the seat of thought and emotion

renown — fame

replenish — fill

reprobate — disqualified; rejected

residue — remainder

revealeth — reveals (the -eth ending means -s or -es)

revellings — wild parties; carousing

sackcloth — coarse dark cloth of goat’s hair, worn in mourning (Rev 6:12).

sanctified — set apart; made holy

scourgeth — whips; punishes severely

seat — throne

seducing — deceiving; leading astray

seraphims — angelic beings

shew — show; display

shewing — showing; proclaiming

smite — strike; hit

snare — trap

sojourn — to stay for a time as a foreigner (Gen 26:3).

sore — a wound or ulcer; also, as an adverb, greatly (Rev 16:2).

sorer — more severe

sorrows — birth pains (“the beginning of sorrows”)

spake — spoke

spoiled — stripped; disarmed (not ruined)

spue — vomit; spit out

stablish — establish; make firm

stubble — straw; dry stalks

subdueth — subdues

subtil / subtility — crafty; cunning

sup — dine; share a meal

sware — swore

tabernacle — dwelling place; tent

tabernacles — tents; dwellings

talent — a weight of about seventy-five pounds

tarry — to remain; to wait (Jn 21:22).

temperance — self-control

thee — you (singular, object form) (*appears throughout*)

thine — your; yours (*appears throughout*)

thither — to that place; there (Gen 19:22).

thou — you (singular, subject form) (*appears throughout*)

threescore — sixty

thy — your (*appears throughout*)

tidings — news

translated — transferred; carried over

travail — labor pains

trucebreakers — covenant-breakers

trump — horn blast; trumpet sound
tumult — panic; uproar
twain — two
unto — to (*appears throughout*)
uttermost — completely; fully
variance — conflict; discord
vesture — clothing; garment
vile — lowly; degraded; shameful
wax — grow; become
waxed — grew; became
whence — from where
whereby — by which (*appears throughout*)
wherefore — therefore; for this reason (*appears throughout*)
whore / **whoremonger** — prostitute / sexually immoral person
woe — grief; disaster
wrought — performed; accomplished
ye — you (plural) (*appears throughout*)