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FEAR NOT THE SECOND DEATH

What Scripture Teaches About the Thousand Years, the Book of Life, and the End of Sin

A Continuous Jubilee Calendar Study

"Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." — Revelation 1:17-18 (KJV)

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Author's Note on Terminology: This paper uses the traditional Christian terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" for clarity. The author recognizes that the books of the Old Testament are the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, which Jewish tradition holds as complete Scripture in its own right, and quotes them with respect for that tradition.

> ***A note on what follows.*** *The interpretation in this paper is my best understanding of Scripture, reached by following its own examples and patterns. It is held to one rule above all others:*
>
> ***Rule 1: No Scriptural conflicts.*** *No conclusion here may contradict any passage of Scripture. Where Scripture does not settle a detail, I say so plainly.*

Scripture is quoted from the King James Version. Pronouns for God and Christ are capitalized in the author's own words; KJV quotations are left as written.

1. The Verse Jesus Stopped Reading

The end of the story begins with a verse Jesus left unfinished. At the start of His ministry, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He stood up and read from Isaiah:

> *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)*

Then He stopped. "And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down" (Luke 4:20). He said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (4:21).

Why He stopped there. "The acceptable year of the Lord" is the language of the Jubilee, the year of liberty (Leviticus 25:10). Jesus came the first time to set captives free from sin: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). He read only what was being fulfilled that day. *(See "God's Clock — Messiah's Reading of Isaiah 61" and "Art Thou He?")*

The words He left unread. Isaiah's very next words are "and the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2). That day was not cancelled. It belongs to His second coming, when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his

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mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

And the words right after that. Isaiah does not end with vengeance. He goes straight on: "To comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:2-3). The day of vengeance ends in comfort.

This paper follows the rest of that verse. It walks through Revelation's fifth, sixth, and seventh seals, the thousand years, the raising of "the rest of the dead," the opening of the Book of Life, and the end of death itself. It may sound like a frightening subject. It is not, for those who belong to Jesus. He says to them, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:17-18). And of His people Scripture promises, "on such the second death hath no power" (Revelation 20:6).

2. The Promise From the Beginning

The whole Bible keeps one promise, and the end of the story is that promise kept. It began the day sin entered the world. God told the serpent that the woman's Seed would crush him: "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). The Savior would be wounded, but the serpent would be destroyed.

The covenant promise, from Moses to John. God repeated the same words through the whole Bible:

Where	The promise
The law of Moses	"I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:12)
The prophets	"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33)
The Last Supper	"This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)
The last pages	"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3)

The old covenant and the new are one story. The promise God gave at Sinai is kept through Jesus' blood and finished in the new earth. *(See "In Due Time" and "The Five Exoduses.")*

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The cross was planned from the start. Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Peter says He "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20). The rescue was never a surprise to God.

Why a God of love must deal with sin. "God is love" (1 John 4:8). He takes no joy in anyone being lost: "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezekiel 33:11). He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

But sin destroys everything it touches, and love cannot let it go on forever. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). God also gives every person a real choice: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

So the end of the story has to answer a hard question. How can God end sin forever and still be shown, before everyone, to be a God of love? Scripture answers it step by step through Revelation's last three seals, and this paper follows those steps in order.

3. The Lamb Who Was Slain Opens the Book

The One who opens the book of judgment is the One who died for sinners. John saw it in heaven: a book in the right hand of God, "written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals" (Revelation 5:1). An angel asked, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (5:2). No one was found, and John "wept much" (5:4).

Then an elder told him, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book" (5:5). John turned and saw not a lion but "a Lamb as it had been slain" (5:6). The Lamb "came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (5:7), and heaven sang why:

> *"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Revelation 5:9)*

The cross is what makes Him worthy. The One trusted to judge every life is the One who gave His life for every sinner. That is why "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22), "because he is the Son of man" (5:27). Our Judge has walked in our shoes.

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Daniel saw the same court. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:10). "One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days… And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (7:13-14). Daniel even said when it would sit: after the long persecution of "a time and times and the dividing of time," then "the judgment shall sit" (7:25-26). *(See "The Four Horsemen," which reads that period as AD 538 to 1798.)*

What the book is. The Lamb receives only one book in Revelation, and Revelation calls a book by His name: "the book of life of the Lamb" (13:8) and "the Lamb's book of life" (21:27). Daniel was told to "seal the book, even to the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4), and no one can read a sealed book until its last seal is broken. So the book is opened in full only after the seventh seal. *(Scripture does not name the book of Revelation 5 outright. Reading it as the Lamb's Book of Life is interpretation, resting on Revelation's own wording.)*

The judging has already begun. The Four Horsemen paper shows the seals as Jesus' own campaign, carried out by His Spirit. At the third seal, a rider carries "a pair of balances" (Revelation 6:5), the scales of judgment: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Daniel 5:27). The voice that speaks comes from "the midst of the four beasts" (6:6), exactly where the Lamb stands (5:6). From then on, Jesus is weighing every life. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

The first four seals are covered in "The Four Horsemen." This paper picks up the story at the fifth.

4. The Fifth Seal: "How Long?"

The fifth seal shows the martyrs asking for justice, and God telling them to rest a little longer. It opens during the great tribulation, with the fifth trumpet (see "The Jubilee Calendar and the Story of the End"):

> *"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Revelation 6:9-11)*

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Who they are. They were slain "for the word of God, and for the testimony," the same message the two witnesses, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, give through God's servants. They are the faithful martyrs of every age, "from the blood of righteous Abel" (Matthew 23:35), for in Babylon "was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Revelation 18:24). They wait for their last fellowservants, the 144,000, God's sealed servants, killed when their testimony is finished (Revelation 6:11; 11:7), and for the rest of God's people, His church and bride, who remain alive, refuse the beast and his mark, and keep the faith. The dead and the living rise and are "caught up together" (1 Thessalonians 4:17), for "they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40).

Why "under the altar." In the Temple, the blood of a sacrifice was poured out "at the bottom of the altar" (Leviticus 4:7). And Scripture says, "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). The Greek word for "souls" here, *psychē* (G5590), also means "life" (as in Matthew 16:25). So the martyrs' lives were poured out like an offering at the foot of God's altar. Paul spoke of his own death the same way: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). The crown waits for "that day," His appearing, for every martyr and every believer who keeps the faith.

How the dead can "cry." Scripture used this picture once before. When Cain killed his brother, God said, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10). Abel was dead, yet "he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4). Like Abel's blood, the martyrs' shed blood calls out to God for justice.

A better voice than Abel's. Abel's blood cried out for judgment. Jesus' blood cries out for something better. Believers have come "to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24). His blood speaks mercy for anyone who will come to Him.

Their rest. The martyrs are given white robes and told to "rest yet for a little season." Revelation explains that rest: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (14:13). They sleep until the last trumpet, when "the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

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Their question, “How long?”, will be answered in two steps. At His coming, He avenges them. After the thousand years, when the seventh seal is broken, everyone will see that every one of His judgments was right.

5. When Mercy’s Door Closes

Before Christ appears, there comes a moment when every person’s choice is final. Scripture shows it first in Noah’s day. God waited patiently while the ark was built (1 Peter 3:20), and Noah preached righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Then God said, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark” (Genesis 7:1), and “the LORD shut him in” (7:16). After that, the door stayed shut.

Jesus told the same story in His parable of the ten virgins: “they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut” (Matthew 25:10). Revelation marks the same moment at the end, when the seven last plagues begin: “no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Revelation 15:8). Then the final word is given:

> *“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” (Revelation 22:11)*

The Shepherd’s Gathering places this close of mercy at about day 1,260 of the great tribulation, when the two witnesses finish their testimony.

What this means for the judgment. When the door shuts, Jesus has finished weighing every life. Every case is decided. Daniel saw that by then the line between the two groups is already drawn: “the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (Daniel 12:10).

But the reasons are not yet shown. Jesus knows why each verdict is right. His people and the angels do not yet see all of it. Paul says the full explanation waits: “judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts” (1 Corinthians 4:5). The thousand years are when He shows them.

Today the door is still open. The close of mercy is still ahead, and the invitation stands now. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him” (Revelation 3:20). “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near” (Isaiah 55:6). “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

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6. The Sixth Seal: “Who Shall Be Able to Stand?”

The sixth seal is Christ’s appearing, and the same sight brings terror to some and joy to others. It comes at the end of the count, day 1,335 (Daniel 12:12):

> *“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood… And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” (Revelation 6:12, 14)*

This is the same moment Jesus described: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened… and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29-30). *(The Shepherd’s Gathering shows the sixth seal, the seventh bowl, and the last trumpet describing this one event.)*

The leaders hide

> *“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:15-17)*

The prophets saw it first. Isaiah saw people run “into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (Isaiah 2:19). Hosea heard the very words: “they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us” (Hosea 10:8).

Jesus spoke these words on the way to the cross. As He carried His cross, women wept for Him. He turned and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves… Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us” (Luke 23:28-30). Even then, His concern was for those who would one day refuse Him.

The first sinners hid, and so do the last. When Adam and Eve sinned, they “hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8). At the end, those who refused Him hide from “the face of him that sitteth on the throne.” Sin has always made people run from God’s face.

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How the wicked fall

Revelation lists the same groups again at His coming, and shows what happens to them:

The groups who hide (Revelation 6:15)	The groups who fall (Revelation 19:18)
“the kings of the earth”	“the flesh of kings”
“the chief captains”	“the flesh of captains”
“the mighty men”	“the flesh of mighty men”
“every bondman, and every free man”	“all men, both free and bond”
“the great men, and the rich men”	“both small and great”

The leaders who cried to the rocks are the ones who fall. They had joined the beast to “make war against him that sat on the horse” (19:19), the same kings of The Brittle Coalition. Then “the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth” (19:21).

The sword of His mouth is His Word. “With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:4). The man of sin is destroyed “with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Jesus had warned, “the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). The Word they refused all their lives is what ends their rebellion. Not by armies, but by His Word: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

No one who refused Him is left alive. “The slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth” (Jeremiah 25:33). Jesus compared that day to Noah’s and Lot’s, when the judgment “destroyed them all” (Luke 17:27, 29). The beast and the false prophet are “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20), and Daniel’s stone strikes the image “upon his feet” and breaks it to pieces (Daniel 2:34).

Those who pierced Him see Him come

Revelation opens with a promise about this very moment: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7). Jesus told the council that condemned Him the same thing: “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64). But most of those who pierced Him have been dead for nearly two thousand years. How will they see Him come?

Daniel answers. At the time Michael stands up and God’s people are delivered, “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

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At His coming, the dead in Christ are resurrected to immortality, “raised incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 15:52), and gathered with the living saints. At the same time, as I read it, some of the wicked, including “they also which pierced him” (Revelation 1:7), are awakened “to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). They are not resurrected to life. Like Lazarus, they are raised mortal. They see Him “coming in the clouds of heaven,” as He told the council (Matthew 26:64), and they die with the rest of the wicked at His coming: “And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse” (Revelation 19:21). After the thousand years, “the rest of the dead” are raised (Revelation 20:5), and every person who ever lived stands before the throne: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened” (Revelation 20:12). Those awakened to shame stand there too.

Doesn’t this conflict with Revelation 20:5? A critic may ask how any of the wicked can be raised at His coming, when John says, “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection” (Revelation 20:5). Scripture answers in four ways.

First, the word “lived” in Revelation 20:5 means living in the resurrection sense. It is the same word John uses for the saints one verse earlier: “and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4). John is contrasting those who receive resurrection life with those who do not. Those awakened to shame never receive that life. They are raised mortal, “to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2), not “to everlasting life” (Daniel 12:2).

Second, Scripture itself does not count a mortal raising as “the resurrection.” Lazarus was raised before Jesus rose (John 12:1), and he was still mortal: “the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death” (John 12:10). Yet Scripture calls Christ “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20) and says “he should be the first that should rise from the dead” (Acts 26:23). If Lazarus’s raising does not break “the first,” then an awakening to shame does not break “the rest of the dead lived not again” (Revelation 20:5).

Third, the timing fits. The awakening to shame happens at His coming, before the thousand years begin, and those awakened die with the rest of the wicked at His coming (Revelation 19:21). Jeremiah describes that day: “And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth” (Jeremiah 25:33). So for the entire thousand years, every one of the wicked is dead, exactly as Revelation 20:5 says.

Fourth, the first resurrection is only for His people: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power” (Revelation 20:6). Those awakened to shame have no part in it. Their awakening

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is not a resurrection to life. It is a witness to shame, so that those who condemned Him see Him come in glory, as He said they would.

Who shall be able to stand?

Revelation answers its own question right away, in chapter 7. First God's servants are sealed (7:3). Then John sees "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations… stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes" (7:9). Who are they? "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).

They do not stand by their own strength. They stand because of the blood of the Lamb. He is "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

One face, two responses. The same face the wicked flee is the face His people long to see. They say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us" (Isaiah 25:9). And the promise for them is simple: "they shall see his face" (Revelation 22:4). At the last trumpet, "the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). That is the first resurrection.

7. The Thousand Years

For a thousand years, the saints are with Christ in heaven, the earth lies empty, and the wicked sleep in their graves. Revelation 20 gives the picture, and the prophets fill in each part.

Where the saints are

Jesus promised where He would take His people: "In my Father's house are many mansions… I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). There they reign with Him:

> *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them… and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4)*

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (20:6).

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The empty earth

When the saints are taken up and the wicked are slain, no one is left alive on the earth. Jeremiah saw it:

> *"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light… I beheld, and, lo, there was no man." (Jeremiah 4:23, 25)*

"Without form, and void" is the same Hebrew as Genesis 1:2, *tohu va-bohu*. The earth goes back to the way it was before creation. Isaiah adds, "the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste… The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled" (Isaiah 24:1, 3). Story of the End reads this as the earth's sabbath rest, like the land resting in the sabbath year (Leviticus 26:34-35).

Satan bound

> *"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." (Revelation 20:2-3)*

What the "bottomless pit" is. The Greek word is *abyssos* (G12). In the Greek Old Testament the apostles read, it is the word for "the deep" in Genesis 1:2: "darkness was upon the face of the deep." It is also the spirit realm where Satan and his angels are held now, unable to appear physically, "the deep" the devils begged not to be sent into (Luke 8:31). At the fifth trumpet God allows Satan to come up out of it and appear (Revelation 9:1-2; 17:8), and at His coming Jesus destroys that visible presence "with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8) and returns him to the abyss. Satan is bound to a world returned to darkness and emptiness, with no one left to deceive. Isaiah saw the same scene: the kings of the earth "shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited" (Isaiah 24:22). *(Reading the abyss as the empty earth is interpretation, built on the shared wording of Genesis 1:2, Jeremiah 4:23, and Revelation 20:3.)*

The rest of the dead sleep

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:5). Scripture calls this waiting sleep:

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- **Daniel.** “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). At His coming, some are awakened to shame without being resurrected to life (see “Those who pierced Him see Him come” in Section 6); the rest sleep until the thousand years end.
- **Job.** “So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep” (Job 14:12).
- **The Preacher and the Psalmist.** “The dead know not any thing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5); “in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4).
- **Jairus’ daughter.** Jesus said, “the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn” (Mark 5:39-40; Matthew 9:24; Luke 8:52-53). They knew she was dead. Jesus called it sleep because He was about to wake her.
- **Lazarus.** “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” The disciples misunderstood: “Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead” (John 11:11-14).
- **Stephen,** the first Christian martyr: “when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:60).
- **The righteous and the wicked alike.** David was a man of deep faith, the king God called “a man after mine own heart” (Acts 13:22). Yet Scripture says of him, “So David slept with his fathers” (1 Kings 2:10). Peter explains that David “fell on sleep… and saw corruption” (Acts 13:36), and “is not ascended into the heavens” (Acts 2:34). Even this faithful king is waiting in the grave for the resurrection. Scripture uses the same words for the wicked king Ahab: he “slept with his fathers” (1 Kings 22:40). Believer or unbeliever, the dead sleep until Christ calls them.
- **The saints at the cross.** “The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose” (Matthew 27:52).
- **Paul.** Christ is “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20); “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (15:51); “them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Thessalonians 4:14).
- **David’s prayer.** “Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death” (Psalm 13:3). “In death there is no remembrance of thee” (Psalm 6:5).

Sleep is a hopeful word. People who sleep wake up. That is why Jesus could call death sleep: He holds the power to wake every sleeper.

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They wait for one voice: “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

The Bridegroom teaches His bride

The verdicts were settled when mercy closed. During the thousand years, Jesus shows His people why each one was right. Scripture describes it in several ways:

- **What was hidden is shown.** The Lord “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts” (1 Corinthians 4:5).
- **What they could not bear before, they learn now.** “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). “Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).
- **They take part in the judgment.** “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?… Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). Daniel saw “judgment was given to the saints of the most High” (Daniel 7:22).
- **The angels learn too.** God’s wisdom is made known “unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places… by the church” (Ephesians 3:10). They will understand why a third of the angels followed Satan (Revelation 12:4, 9).
- **He teaches His bride Himself.** “All thy children shall be taught of the LORD” (Isaiah 54:13). Christ cares for His church “with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church” (Ephesians 5:26-27).

Why this matters. Many believers have loved someone who never turned to God. During the thousand years, no one has to take God’s judgment on faith alone. Every saint sees the whole record and can say with Abraham, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25). When trust is complete, it is complete forever: “affliction shall not rise up the second time” (Nahum 1:9).

8. The City Comes Down

When the thousand years end, Christ returns to the earth with His saints and the holy city, and the rest of the dead are raised to face Him.

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Christ comes with all His saints. Zechariah saw it: “his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives… and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee” (Zechariah 14:4-5). Jesus ascended from that same mountain (Acts 1:11-12). Enoch, seventh from Adam, prophesied the same day: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds” (Jude 14-15). “Convince” means to convict, to show plainly. That is exactly what happens next.

The city comes down. John saw “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven” (Revelation 21:2), the city Abraham “looked for… which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). Zechariah says the land around it is made a plain, and the city “shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place” (Zechariah 14:10). *(Revelation 21:1-2 is John’s summary, stepping back in time the way Revelation often does. The city comes down once, at the end of the thousand years, where the wicked find it in 20:9.)*

The rest of the dead are raised

Now the sleepers of John 5:29 hear His voice. “The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them” (Revelation 20:13).

Raised, but not changed. Scripture uses two different words for what happens at a resurrection. Paul says “the dead shall be raised [*egeirō*] incorruptible, and we shall be changed [*allassō*]” (1 Corinthians 15:52). Believers are raised *and* changed: “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body” (15:44), “fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21). Every one of those promises is spoken to believers. The wicked are raised in bodies God gives them, as He gives “to every seed his own body” (1 Corinthians 15:38), since their old bodies have long returned to dust. But they are not changed into glory, and they are not given immortality; that belongs only to those who are Christ’s (1 Corinthians 15:23, 52-53). They remain mortal, and the fire can destroy them, “both soul and body” (Matthew 10:28). Their hearts are unchanged too, still not understanding what is coming.

Raised for one purpose. Jesus named it: “the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). The Greek word is *kriseōs*, “judgment.” Isaiah had said the kings shut in the pit would be “visited” after many days (Isaiah 24:22). The Hebrew word, *paqad* (H6485), means to be called to account.

The last rebellion

> *“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four*

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> *quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." (Revelation 20:7-8)*

These nations come from every age. Their number is "as the sand of the sea." They are all the nations and empires that refused God since sin entered the world, the same nations Satan "deceiveth" through history (12:9; 18:23). The name Magog reaches back to the first nations listed after the flood: "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog" (Genesis 10:2). Ezekiel used "Gog, the land of Magog" for a final enemy gathered from many peoples (Ezekiel 38:2-6). In this research Gog is the prophetic identity of the devil, the same character as John's dragon, and Magog the nations he leads. Ezekiel's prophecy was first given conditionally (Jeremiah 18:9-10), and it is fulfilled in a greater way here, when "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20:9); "I will send a fire on Magog" (Ezekiel 39:6).

A thousand years did not change them. Raised from the dead, they go straight back to war against God. Jesus had said it would be so: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Their own actions show the judgment was right.

> *"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." (Revelation 20:9)*

"Camp" is *parembolē* (G3925), the word for an army's camp (Hebrews 11:34). The saints are the Lord's army, "the armies which were in heaven" who came with Him (Revelation 19:14). Satan's army of every age surrounds God's army inside the city.

They can never get in. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers…" (22:14-15). The wicked stand outside. The saints are safe inside. *(Some read Zechariah 14:16-19 as mortal nations living through the thousand years. Section 12 explains why it is best read as a conditional promise.)*

9. The Books and the Book

Where we are in the story. The thousand years are over. Christ and His saints have come down with the holy city. The wicked of every age have been raised, and Satan has gathered them around the city to attack it. They stand outside its

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walls, and the saints are safe inside. Before any fire falls, Jesus does what Enoch said He would do: He shows each one the truth about their own life (Jude 14-15). This section walks through that judgment one step at a time.

Before the fire falls, every person sees the record of their own life, and then the Lamb breaks the seventh seal and opens the Book of Life. John steps back to show this judgment:

> *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:11-12)*

Notice the order: first "the books," then "another book," the Book of Life.

First, the books of record

God keeps a record of every life. "A book of remembrance was written before him" (Malachi 3:16). "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed" (Luke 12:2).

Each one is judged by the light they had. "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself… shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not… shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke 12:47-48). The Shepherd's Gathering shows that every person is measured by the same two witnesses: what God made known to them through His Word, and how they answered the pleading of His Spirit.

Every knee bows. When the record has been shown, no one can argue with it. God swore long ago: "unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isaiah 45:23). Paul quotes it: "every knee should bow… and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). Even the lost will admit that Jesus judged them fairly. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

So far: each person has seen the record of their own life, measured by the light they were given. Every knee has bowed, and no one argues. One book is still sealed.

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Then, the seventh seal

> *"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." (Revelation 8:1)*

This is the last seal on the book the Lamb received in Revelation 5. When it breaks, the book can finally be read. Revelation shows that book opened at the white throne: "another book was opened, which is the book of life" (20:12).

Why heaven falls silent. The record has been shown, and the answer is plain, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). "The kings shall shut their mouths at him" (Isaiah 52:15). *(The "half an hour" is a short, literal span. The word "about" tells us John is estimating, not measuring.)*

So far: the books of record are open, and now the last seal is broken. Heaven is silent while everyone sees what the Book of Life holds.

What the Book of Life shows

Every life was written before birth. David wrote, "in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:16). Scripture also calls it "the book of the living" (Psalm 69:28).

Names are blotted out. Moses knew his own name was already there: "blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." God answered, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus 32:32-33). David prayed of the wicked, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Psalm 69:28).

God knew before it happened. The Father knows "the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). Believers are "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter 1:2). Revelation describes the lost as those "whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" (17:8). The Greek verb, *gegraptai*, describes a present state: their names do not *stand* written there. The Father wrote every life, and by His foreknowledge of each person's free choice, He blotted out the names of those who would refuse Him.

Why some verses sound future. "Him will I blot out" (Exodus 32:33); "I will not blot out his name" (Revelation 3:5). God's record is complete from His side of time, but Scripture speaks to us from inside time, where each choice is still being made. He "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17).

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So far: the Father wrote every life before anyone was born, and, knowing each free choice, He blotted out the names of those who would refuse Him. Now the two records are placed side by side.

The two records match

Here is the moment the whole story has been building toward. Jesus judged each life openly, before the angels and His saints. Now the Father's book, written before anyone was born, is opened beside those judgments, and **they match exactly**.

That proves three things at once:

1. **God knew everything in advance.** The book was written before the first life began.
2. **God forced no one.** Each person's record shows their own choices, made freely: "I have set before you life and death… therefore choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19).
3. **God is love, not a tyrant.** He paid for every sin with His own Son, offered life to all, and honored every choice.

Scripture says God Himself is shown righteous in that hour. Paul writes, "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Romans 3:4). In a sense, God has been on trial before His whole creation, and He wins. Heaven sings, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3), and "true and righteous are thy judgments" (16:7). The martyrs' question, "How long… dost thou not judge?" (6:10), is answered in full.

(The identification of the sealed book as the Book of Life, and the Father writing every name and blotting out the lost by foreknowledge, is interpretation built on the verses above.)

The order of events, from the end of the thousand years:

1. The thousand years end. Christ, His saints, and the holy city come down (Section 8).
2. The rest of the dead are raised, mortal and not glorified (Section 8).
3. Satan is loosed. The raised wicked surround the city, but they cannot enter it (Section 8).
4. The books of record are opened, and every knee bows (this section).
5. The Lamb breaks the seventh seal. The Book of Life is opened in silence, and it matches Jesus' judgments (this section).

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6. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them (Section 10).
7. The devil, and all not found written in the Book of Life, are cast into the lake of fire, the second death. No one rises from it (Section 10).
8. The old earth passes away, and God makes all things new (Sections 10-11).

10. The End of Death

After the judgment, sin and death are destroyed for good, and nothing will ever hurt again. Two fires follow, one after the other. First, fire comes down from heaven and ends the bodies of the raised wicked. Then the lake of fire, unlike any other fire, destroys soul and body forever.

Two fires

The fire from heaven. “Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Revelation 20:9). This fire ends their bodies, which were raised mortal, not glorified.

The lake of fire. This fire is different. It was already burning a thousand years earlier, when the beast and the false prophet “were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (19:20). Now “the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are” (20:10). Then “death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (20:14-15).

No other fire is like it. Jesus called it “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

Why it is called everlasting. An ordinary fire can only destroy the body. Jesus said, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). The lake of fire can do what no other fire can. Whatever it destroys is gone forever and will never be raised again. That is why Scripture calls it “everlasting destruction” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Its work is permanent: “they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Malachi 4:3).

It was never prepared for people. In the same parable, Jesus told His sheep, “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). The kingdom was prepared for people. The fire was prepared for the devil. Those who end there chose to follow him.

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God takes no joy in it

Scripture calls this God's "strange work" and "strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). "For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lamentations 3:33). Even Satan's end is described as an ending, not endless life: "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee… and never shalt thou be any more" (Ezekiel 28:18-19).

What "for ever and ever" means

Revelation 20:10 says the devil "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Some take this to mean endless torment. Scripture's own use of "for ever" shows a different meaning: the punishment lasts until God's measured judgment is complete, and its result can never be undone.

How Scripture uses it	What it shows
Jonah in the fish: "the earth with her bars was about me for ever" (Jonah 2:6)	It lasted three days. "For ever" lasts as long as its subject can last.
A servant "shall serve him for ever" (Exodus 21:6)	For the servant's lifetime.
Achish of David: "he shall be my servant for ever" (1 Samuel 27:12)	For as long as David lived.
Sodom and Gomorrah suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7)	God turned them "into ashes" (2 Peter 2:6). They are not still burning; the result is eternal.
Edom's "smoke thereof shall go up for ever" (Isaiah 34:10)	The next verse: "the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it" (34:11). The fire ended. Revelation 14:11 borrows this picture.
"Everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46)	Like "eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12), done once, with a result that lasts forever.

The rest of Scripture agrees:

- **The wicked are consumed.** "They shall be ashes under the soles of your feet" (Malachi 4:3). "Into smoke shall they consume away" (Psalm 37:20). "The wicked shall not be" (Psalm 37:10). It is "everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).
- **Only God gives endless life.** God "only hath immortality" (1 Timothy 6:16). It is given to those who "seek for glory and honour and immortality" (Romans 2:7), when "this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), not endless life in pain.
- **Each is measured, then it is over.** "They were judged every man according to their works" (Revelation 20:13). Some receive "many stripes," some "few" (Luke 12:47-48). The Law measured restitution the same way: "whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour" (Exodus 22:9). Then "he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9). And the "no rest day nor night" of Revelation

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14:11 describes, in this research's reading, those who take the mark during the great tribulation: their choice is final, and they have no peace while the Spirit "will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8), until God's offer of salvation ends at the seventh trumpet (Revelation 10:7; 11:15-19).

Where there is smoke

Many sincere believers point to the smoke in Revelation as proof that the lost burn forever:

> *"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." (Revelation 14:11)*

> *"And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." (Revelation 19:3)*

Look closely, though. These verses do not say the fire burns forever. They say the **smoke** rises forever. All through Scripture, smoke is what is left after a fire has done its work. It is the witness that a burning happened, not proof that it is still going on.

The wicked become smoke. David wrote:

> *"But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." (Psalm 37:20)*

The wicked are not kept alive in the fire. They are consumed, and smoke is what remains.

Sodom: fire first, then smoke. God's judgment on Sodom came in one act: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven" (Genesis 19:24). The next morning, Abraham went back to look:

> *"And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." (Genesis 19:27-28)*

Abraham saw no flames, only smoke rising over a judgment that was already finished. This is the very event Jude calls "an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

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Babylon: burned in one hour, smoke for ever. Babylon's end comes swiftly: "for in one hour is thy judgment come" (Revelation 18:10). The kings of the earth "shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning" (Revelation 18:9), and an angel declares that she "shall be found no more at all" (Revelation 18:21). Yet heaven says, "her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Revelation 19:3). The burning took one hour. The smoke rises "for ever and ever." Babylon no longer exists, and her smoke is the lasting witness that her judgment is finished.

Smoke that rises before God is a memorial. Revelation shows smoke rising before God in one other place:

> *"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." (Revelation 8:4)*

In the Greek, the word for "ascended" here is *anabainō* (G305), the same word used for the smoke of torment that "ascendeth" in Revelation 14:11. It is also the word the angel used when he told Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). In Scripture, what rises before God stands as a memorial. The prayers of the saints rise as a memorial of faith. The smoke of judgment rises as a memorial of where rebellion ends. Neither one is a fire that never goes out.

Revelation 14 itself puts the fire first. The verse just before says the one who takes the mark "shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:10). Then "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Revelation 14:11). It is the smoke *of* their torment, what rises from it afterward. The verse does not say the torment goes on forever.

Where Scripture shows smoke rising	What happened to the fire
Sodom (Genesis 19:24, 28)	The fire fell in one act; Abraham saw only smoke the next morning
Edom (Isaiah 34:10-11)	Smoke "for ever," yet owls and ravens live in the ruins
Babylon (Revelation 18:10, 21; 19:3)	Burned "in one hour" and "found no more at all," yet "her smoke rose up for ever and ever"
The wicked (Psalm 37:20)	"Into smoke shall they consume away"

So the verses most often quoted for endless burning, when we read them carefully, describe the opposite. The fire does its work, completely and justly, for "they were judged every man according to their works" (Revelation 20:13). Whether the smoke rises only while the burning lasts, or lingers afterward as Sodom's did the next morning, Scripture's "for ever and ever" points to a

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judgment that is final and can never be undone. Sin will never rise again: “affliction shall not rise up the second time” (Nahum 1:9).

Death itself dies

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26). Paul quotes two prophets for that moment: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:54-55; Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14). Hosea had heard God promise it centuries before: “O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction” (Hosea 13:14).

The old earth passes away

The same fire cleanses the earth. “The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). What can be shaken is removed, “that those things which cannot be shaken may remain” (Hebrews 12:27), and the city remains. The saints are kept safe inside it, as Noah was kept in the ark and the three Hebrews walked unharmed in the furnace. “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?… He that walketh righteously” (Isaiah 33:14-15).

11. All Things New

The story ends where it began, with God living among His people on a perfect earth. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Revelation 21:1). Isaiah heard it first: “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17).

Made new, not replaced. The word “new” here is *kainos* (G2537), new in quality. God says, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5), not “I make all new things.” Peter calls it “the restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21). The earth is restored, “wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

The promise is kept. The holy city is with God’s people on the new earth, and the covenant promise from Section 2 is finally kept in full: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:3-4).

Eden restored

Everything lost in Genesis is given back in Revelation:

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Lost in Eden	Restored at the end
“Cursed is the ground for thy sake” (Genesis 3:17)	“And there shall be no more curse” (Revelation 22:3)
Cherubims sent “to keep the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24)	“That they may have right to the tree of life” (Revelation 22:14)
Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (Genesis 3:8)	“And they shall see his face” (Revelation 22:4)
“Unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19)	“There shall be no more death” (Revelation 21:4)

The final Jubilee

Story of the End and The Five Exoduses show God’s calendar at work in the last chapter of history. After six thousand years of work, the thousand years are the earth’s sabbath, when the land rests (Leviticus 25:4; 26:34-35). The new creation is the great Jubilee: “proclaim liberty throughout all the land… and ye shall return every man unto his possession” (Leviticus 25:10).

Paul uses the same Jubilee word for creation itself: it “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21). God’s people return to their lost possession, the earth: “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). The Continuous Jubilee Calendar builds this into its math: year 50 is also year 1 of the next block. One order ends, and a new one begins.

Isaiah 61 fulfilled

At Nazareth, Jesus proclaimed “the acceptable year of the Lord” and closed the book. Now every word of Isaiah’s promise comes true:

- “To comfort all that mourn… to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isaiah 61:2-3).
- “Everlasting joy shall be unto them” (61:7).
- “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (61:10).

John saw that bride: the holy city, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). God’s people of both Testaments stand together in it: the names of “the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” on its gates, and “the twelve apostles of the Lamb” on its foundations (21:12, 14). The day of vengeance has passed, and the comfort Isaiah promised has come.

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12. Questions Readers Ask

These questions come from verses many faithful believers read differently. Each is answered by Scripture's own words, held to Rule 1.

"Doesn't Zechariah 14 show nations living on earth during the thousand years?"

Zechariah 14:16 says "every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King… and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Those who refuse get no rain and a plague (14:17-18), and people still offer sacrifices (14:21).

Zechariah wrote around 520 BC, to the remnant rebuilding the Temple after Babylon. His book states its condition plainly: "And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God" (Zechariah 6:15). God works this way with such promises: "If that nation… turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil" and "If it do evil… then I will repent of the good" (Jeremiah 18:8, 10). Story of the End shows the same thing with Ezekiel's temple, which was never built because the people did not follow the plan.

The New Testament treats Zechariah 14 in two ways:

- **Parts it applies to Christ and the new Jerusalem.** His feet on the Mount of Olives (14:4; Acts 1:11-12); coming "and all the saints with thee" (14:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:13); light at evening (14:7; Revelation 21:25); "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem" (14:8; Revelation 22:1), which Jesus applied to the Spirit (John 7:37-39); and "no more utter destruction" (14:11; Revelation 22:3).
- **Parts it never uses.** The yearly pilgrimage of mortal nations, the drought and plague, and the sacrifices.

Taken as future events, those parts would conflict with Scripture: "there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18), and in the new earth "there shall be no more death" (Revelation 21:4). Read as a conditional offer to post-exile Israel, they fit. The heart of the offer was fulfilled a better way, as the nations came to God through Christ (Acts 15:16-17; Ephesians 2:19).

"What about Isaiah 65:20, which speaks of death in the new earth?"

Isaiah 65:20 speaks of a child dying "an hundred years old" and of "the sinner." Revelation quotes Isaiah 65:17-19 for the new earth (new heavens and earth, and no more weeping), then stops before verse 20. That is the same pattern as Zechariah 14, and like Jesus closing the book mid-verse in Isaiah 61. The parts

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that fit a world without death carry forward; the parts that assume death belong to the conditional offer.

“If everyone is dead, who are ‘the nations’ Satan cannot deceive?”

Revelation 20:3 says Satan is bound “that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” Those nations are the ones he deceived throughout history (12:9; 18:23), now asleep in the grave. When they are raised, he deceives them again (20:8). He can deceive no one during the thousand years because no one is alive.

“If the dead sleep, how do the souls under the altar cry out?”

Section 4 shows Scripture’s own picture: the martyrs’ lives were poured out like the blood of a sacrifice at the foot of the altar (Leviticus 4:7; 17:11), and their blood cries out the way Abel’s did (Genesis 4:10; Hebrews 11:4). The same chapter says they “rest” until their number is complete (Revelation 6:11).

“Doesn’t Isaiah 66:24 say the worm never dies?”

Isaiah 66:24 reads: “they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.” Jesus quoted it three times when He warned about “hell fire” (Mark 9:44, 46, 48).

What Isaiah describes. The verse comes right after the new heavens and new earth, where “from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me” (Isaiah 66:22-23). What the worshippers see are “carcases”: dead bodies, not living people in pain.

What the worm does in Scripture. The worm is Scripture’s picture of a body consumed in death. Of the king of Babylon in his grave: “the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee” (Isaiah 14:11). Of the wicked: “the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered” (Job 24:20). King Herod “was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost” (Acts 12:23). A worm that “shall not die” is one nothing stops until its work is done.

Where Jesus’ word “hell” comes from. The word Jesus used is *geenna* (G1067), the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem. Jeremiah said God would make it “the valley of slaughter… And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven” (Jeremiah 7:31-33). Jesus pointed to a real place known for dead bodies, not living ones.

What “not quenched” means. It means no one can put the fire out until it has finished. God said of a forest, “the flaming flame shall not be quenched… I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched” (Ezekiel 20:47-48). He said the

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same of Jerusalem: “it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched” (Jeremiah 17:27). That fire burned in 586 BC (2 Chronicles 36:19), and it is not burning today. Malachi gives the result: “they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Malachi 4:3).

“Does God’s clock keep running for the dead?”

God made time along with everything else: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), a beginning, a heaven, and an earth, all at once. The God who made them is not bound by them. “From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psalm 90:2); “the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee” (1 Kings 8:27). Yet He steps into time to keep His promises: “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son” (Galatians 4:4).

Scripture’s clocks, including the Jubilee count this research follows, measure the world of the living. They measure nothing for the dead, because the dead experience nothing: “the dead know not any thing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5); “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave” (9:10). The world counts a thousand years (Revelation 20:5), but the sleeper counts none. Whether someone died in Abel’s day or on the last day, the next thing they know is the voice of Jesus calling them out (John 5:28-29). For a believer, that means closing their eyes in faith and opening them to see Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

“Doesn’t Paul say, ‘absent from the body… present with the Lord’?”

Paul wrote, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). He wrote to a church where some said “there is no resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:12), and the resurrection is his point. He did not want to be “unclothed,” without a body, but “clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Corinthians 5:4). He had just written that God “shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” (4:14). Paul knew when believers meet the Lord: at the last trump, “and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Because the dead know nothing while they sleep, the next thing a believer knows after closing their eyes is being with the Lord. Paul’s words and the sleep of death agree.

“What about the thief on the cross?”

One of the men crucified with Jesus said, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Jesus answered, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:42-43).

Where paradise is. Scripture places paradise where God is. “The tree of life… is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7), and that tree stands in the

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holy city by “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (22:1-2). Paul was “caught up to the third heaven… into paradise” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

Jesus did not go there that day. On Friday, Jesus was laid in the tomb, “in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). On Sunday morning He told Mary, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:17). If Jesus had not yet gone to the Father, the thief could not have been with Him in paradise on Friday.

When the promise is kept. Notice what the thief asked for. He did not ask to go somewhere that day. He asked Jesus to remember him “when thou comest into thy kingdom,” on a day still ahead. Jesus explained when that day is: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory… then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory,” and He will say to His people, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom” (Matthew 25:31, 34). That is His Second Coming. On that day “the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The thief will be among them. He will rise from the grave and go with Jesus to the place Jesus went to prepare, where the tree of life stands in the paradise of God (John 14:3; Revelation 2:7).

To the thief, no time will seem to pass at all. The dead are asleep and know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5). He closed his eyes on the cross, and the very next thing he will see is Jesus coming in His kingdom, just as he asked.

Where the comma goes. The oldest Greek manuscripts have no punctuation, so translators decide where the comma goes. It can also read, “Verily I say unto thee to day, shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Moses spoke the same way: “I have set before thee this day life and good” (Deuteronomy 30:15). On that reading, “to day” marks when Jesus made the promise, not when it would be fulfilled. Most translations put the comma before “To day,” so this paper rests its answer on John 20:17, not on the comma.

The hope in it. The thief had no time left to do good works, no time to be baptized, and nothing to offer but faith. He looked at a dying man and called Him “Lord.” Jesus promised him the kingdom on the spot. That promise was sure the day it was spoken, and the thief’s next waking moment will be its fulfillment.

“Didn’t Jesus receive His kingdom when He rose?”

After His resurrection Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Some say He came into His kingdom then. Scripture shows two steps: receiving the kingdom, and then coming back to rule in it.

Jesus told a parable to explain the difference, because people “thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” A nobleman “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” Only “when he was

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returned, having received the kingdom," did he call his servants and reward them (Luke 19:11-15). The nobleman is Jesus. He received the kingdom when He went to His Father, and He rewards His people when He comes back.

Where is Jesus now? He sits on His Father's throne: "I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21). He is waiting, "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (Hebrews 10:13). He takes His own throne when He returns "in his glory" (Matthew 25:31), at the last trumpet, when heaven announces, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15). That is why Jesus taught us to keep praying, "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). And that is the day the thief asked to be remembered.

"What about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16?"

In this story, a rich man dies and is in torment, while a poor beggar named Lazarus is carried "into Abraham's bosom." The rich man can see Abraham across "a great gulf" and begs for a drop of water to cool his tongue (Luke 16:19-31). Many read it as a picture of what happens right after death.

It is one of Jesus' teaching stories. It comes in a chapter of them: the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, and the unjust steward (Luke 15-16). Like those stories, it uses a picture to teach one lesson. Some details cannot be read literally. The rich man is already in the flames while his five brothers are still living on earth (Luke 16:27-28), yet Scripture places the punishment of the lost after the resurrection: "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:5). People in torment talk with people in comfort across a gulf. And the righteous are held in Abraham's bosom, though Abraham and the faithful "received not the promise" yet (Hebrews 11:39).

Its lessons are a warning and a final verdict. The rich man asks for Lazarus to be sent back from the dead to warn his five brothers. Abraham answers, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (16:31). The story also shows that the verdict cannot be changed: "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot" (16:26). Once a life is over, its choice stands, just as when mercy's door closes (Revelation 22:11). The story was not given to describe the state of the dead, but it does teach that judgment is final.

Who it was told to. Jesus told it while "the Pharisees also, who were covetous… derided him" (Luke 16:14). He named the beggar but not the rich man. Many see in the rich man the high priest's family: he wore "purple and fine linen," the colors of the priesthood (Exodus 28:5-6), and he had five brothers, like the five sons of the high priest Annas, whose son-in-law Caiaphas judged Jesus (John 18:13). That family belonged to the Sadducees, who said "there is no

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resurrection" (Acts 23:8). *(This identification is interpretation; the parable itself does not name him.)*

Faith, not standing. The beggar's name, Lazarus, is the Hebrew Eleazar, "God has helped." The story sets faith against trust in one's own standing, not Jew against Gentile (Romans 11:20-26), and "What Is Death?" explains it in full.

Then it came true. Jesus raised a real man named Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44). Many believed, but the leaders who rejected Moses and the prophets did not. They planned to kill Jesus, and Lazarus too (John 11:53; 12:10-11). One rose from the dead, and they still would not be persuaded, just as the story said.

And it will come true once more. At the end of the thousand years, all the lost are raised from the dead, and even then they follow Satan against God's city (Section 8).

"Doesn't Jesus say no one knows the day or the hour?"

Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Some say that if Daniel's 1,335 days can be counted, people would know the day of His return, so the count must be wrong.

Jesus answered this Himself, in the very next verse. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (24:37). And God told Noah the day: "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth" (Genesis 7:4). Noah knew. The world did not. They went on "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," and "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away" (Matthew 24:38-39). That is the picture Jesus chose: His servant knows when the final count has begun, and the world is still caught by surprise.

The thief comes only to those who are not watching. "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night… But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4). "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief" (Revelation 3:3).

Daniel's numbers are for the wise at the end. "The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end… none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:9-10).

No one knows the date ahead of time. Scripture gives no date for the day the count begins, and these papers set none. Before the count begins, no one knows. Once it begins, those who watch, like Noah, can know, while the world goes on as if nothing is coming.

"Won't people get a second chance during the thousand years?"

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No. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). When mercy closes, every choice stands (Revelation 22:11). The raised wicked prove it themselves: after a thousand years, they go straight back to war against God (20:8-9). That is why Scripture urges, “now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

“Doesn’t Revelation 5:10 say the saints reign on the earth?”

Yes: “we shall reign on the earth.” That reign is on the earth made new, where “they shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 22:5). During the thousand years, they reign with Christ in heaven, where He promised to take them (John 14:3).

“Doesn’t Ecclesiastes 1:4 say the earth abides for ever?”

It does: “the earth abideth for ever.” God does not throw His creation away. He makes it new (*kainos*, new in quality; Revelation 21:5) in “the restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21).

13. What This Paper Shows

Scripture’s own order runs from the cross to the new earth without a break. Here is the whole story in one table:

When	What happens	Scripture
Before creation	The Father writes the book of every life; the Lamb is foreordained	Psalm 139:16; Revelation 13:8; 1 Peter 1:20
The cross	The Lamb is slain, and so is worthy to open the book	Revelation 5:9; Luke 22:20
After the 1,260 years	The heavenly court sits; the Lamb takes the book	Daniel 7:9-14, 26; Revelation 5:7
The third seal	Jesus begins weighing every life	Revelation 6:5-6; Daniel 5:27; 1 Peter 4:17
The fifth seal	The martyrs ask “How long?” and are told to rest	Revelation 6:9-11; 14:13
About day 1,260-1,264	Mercy closes; every verdict is sealed	Revelation 15:8; 22:11
Day 1,335, the sixth seal	Christ appears; the leaders hide; the wicked fall by the sword of His mouth; the saints rise and are gathered	Revelation 6:12-17; 19:18-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
The thousand years	The earth lies empty; Satan is bound; the wicked sleep; Jesus teaches His bride why each verdict was right	Jeremiah 4:23-26; Revelation 20:1-6; 1 Corinthians 4:5

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When	What happens	Scripture
End of the thousand years	Christ and the saints come with the city; the rest of the dead are raised, mortal and not glorified; Satan deceives them; they surround the city	Zechariah 14:4-5; Revelation 20:5, 7-9, 13
The white throne	The books of record are opened; every knee bows	Revelation 20:11-12; Philippians 2:10-11
The seventh seal	Silence in heaven; the Book of Life opened; it matches every verdict	Revelation 8:1; 20:12
The end of death	Fire from heaven; the lake of fire; the second death; death destroyed	Revelation 20:9-10, 14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:26, 54
All things new	The earth made new; God dwells with His people	Revelation 21:1-5; Isaiah 65:17

(Day numbers follow Story of the End and The Shepherd's Gathering. The close of mercy is marked "about" because it rests on lining up two periods.)

Scripture states: the dead in Christ rise first at His coming, and "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:5); Satan is bound for the thousand years and loosed after them (20:3, 7); the books and the Book of Life are opened at the white throne (20:12); every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10-11); the wicked who are not written in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire, the second death (20:14-15); and God makes all things new and dwells with His people (21:1-5).

The pattern: the first sinners hid from God's face, and so do the last (Genesis 3:8; Revelation 6:16); the land rests in its sabbath, and liberty comes in the Jubilee (Leviticus 25); God shuts His people in and carries them through, as with Noah (Genesis 7:16); and Eden's losses are restored one by one (Genesis 3; Revelation 22).

Interpretation: that the book of Revelation 5 is the Lamb's Book of Life; that the Father wrote every life and blotted out the lost by foreknowledge; that the seventh seal is broken after the thousand years at the white throne; that the thousand years are Jesus teaching His bride; that the abyss is the empty earth; that Revelation 20:11-15 and 21:1-2 step back in time; that the two fires are distinct; and that Zechariah 14:16-21 and Isaiah 65:20 are conditional promises. These are offered as my best understanding, held to Rule 1.

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14. Fear Not

No one who belongs to Jesus needs to fear the end of the story. The raising of "the rest of the dead" is not for them. They rise first, at His coming, and "on such the second death hath no power" (Revelation 20:6).

Jesus Himself has already passed through death and come out the other side: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore… and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18). The One who holds the keys is the One who died for you.

His promise is simple:

> *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24)*

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17). "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

Your name matters to Him. The book is about names, and God knows yours. "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1). Jesus promised, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5).

The invitation is still open. The last invitation in the Bible is spoken by the Spirit and the church together:

> *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)*

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "Fear thou not; for I am with thee" (Isaiah 41:10). The day of vengeance Jesus left unread at Nazareth will come, but it ends in comfort, beauty for ashes, and a world where God Himself wipes away every tear.

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Scripture: all quotations are from the King James Version (KJV). Strong's numbers are from James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

Original-language data: the Greek New Testament (SBL edition, as tagged by the MorphGNT project) and the Hebrew Old Testament (the Westminster Leningrad Codex, as tagged by the Open Scriptures Hebrew Bible project). The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) for *abyssos* in Genesis 1:2 and *anathema* in Zechariah 14:11.

Larry W. Wilson, a Bible prophecy author and teacher, and founder of Wake Up America Seminars in Bellbrook, Ohio, whose books are free to read at wake-up.org. This paper draws on *The Lamb's Book of Life* (2016; 2nd ed. 2019), for the sealed book as the Lamb's Book of Life written by the Father before creation, the names of the lost blotted out by foreknowledge, the seventh seal broken after the thousand years, the books of record opened before the Book of Life, and the agreement of the two records clearing God of the charge of tyranny; *The Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast* (2021), for the saints reigning with Christ as judges during the thousand years and the Ark's door as a picture of the close of mercy; and the ordering of the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Wilson quotes the New International Version; this paper quotes the King James Version throughout, and does not follow him in every detail.

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