Annihilation vs. Eternal Torment



Dr. Andy Woods
Senior Pastor – Sugar Land Bible Church
President – Chafer Theological Seminary

ANNIHILATION VS. ETERNAL CONSCIOUS TORMENT

I. **Introduction to the Controversy**

II. Biblical Arguments Against Annihilation

III. Theological Arguments Against Annihilation

IV. Answering Annihilationist Biblical Arguments

V. Answering Annihilationist Theological Arguments

VI. Examining Church History

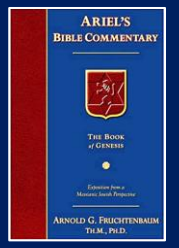
VII. Conclusion





Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

Footsteps of the Messiah, 707-8



"**Conditional immortality** means the soul is not inherently immortal; immortality is not part of the make-up of the soul. Rather, immortality is a gift for the saved only. So at death, the unbeliever simply becomes non-existent, and only the believer continues to exist…What **annihilationism** says is this: the unsaved soul is annihilated after a temporary period of punishment. These people do believe that the unsaved soul goes to Hell, but not for eternity, only temporarily. Eventually the unsaved soul is annihilated after suffering a duration of punishment."

PROTESTIA

Kirk Cameron Denies ‘Eternal Conscious Torment,’ Is Now An Annihilationist?

Staff Writer December 6, 2025



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II. Anti-Annihilationist Texts

A. Dan. 12:2

B. Matt. 25:46

C. Mark 9:47-48

D. Matt. 8:12

E. Luke 16:19-31



F. 2 Thess. 1:9

G. Heb. 6:2

H. Rev. 14:11

I. Rev. 20:10

J. Rev. 19:20

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III. Theological Arguments Against Annihilation

A. Underestimates sin's severity

B. Contradicts humanity's nature

C. Denies degrees of punishment

D. Seeks to escape sin's consequences



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IV. Answering Annihilationist Biblical Arguments

A. 2nd death (Rev. 20:14)

B. Destroy (Rev. 11:18)

C. Destruction (2 Thess. 1:9)

D. Burning up (Matt. 3:12)

E. Eternal results (Rev. 14:11)



IV. Answering Annihilationist Biblical Arguments

F. Perdition (2 Pet. 3:7)

G. Better to have never been born (Mark 14:21)

H. Wicked perishing (2 Pet. 3:9)

I. Blotted out of existence (Hebrews 9:25–26)

J. Life activity suspended in death (Eccles. 9:10)



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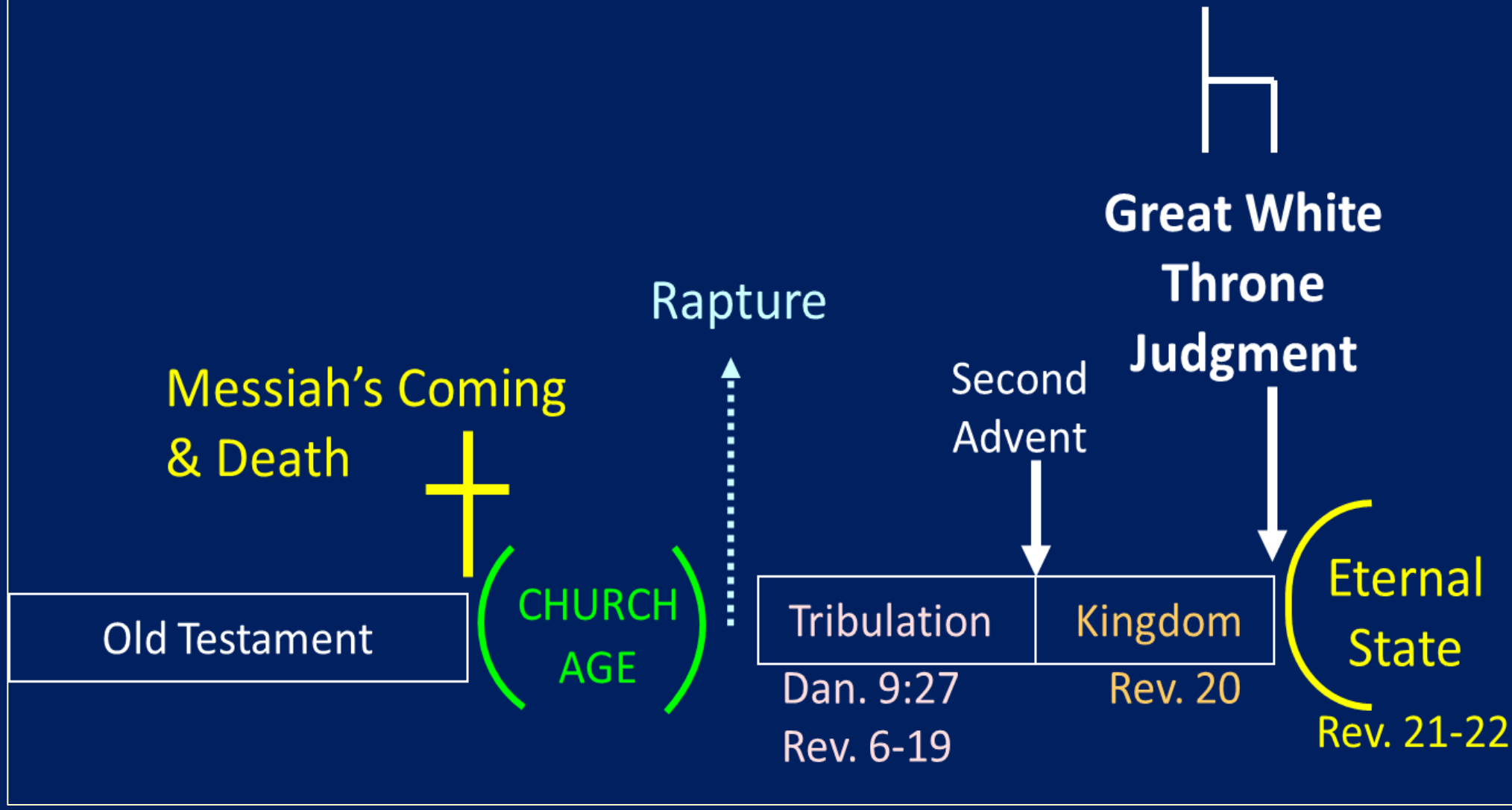
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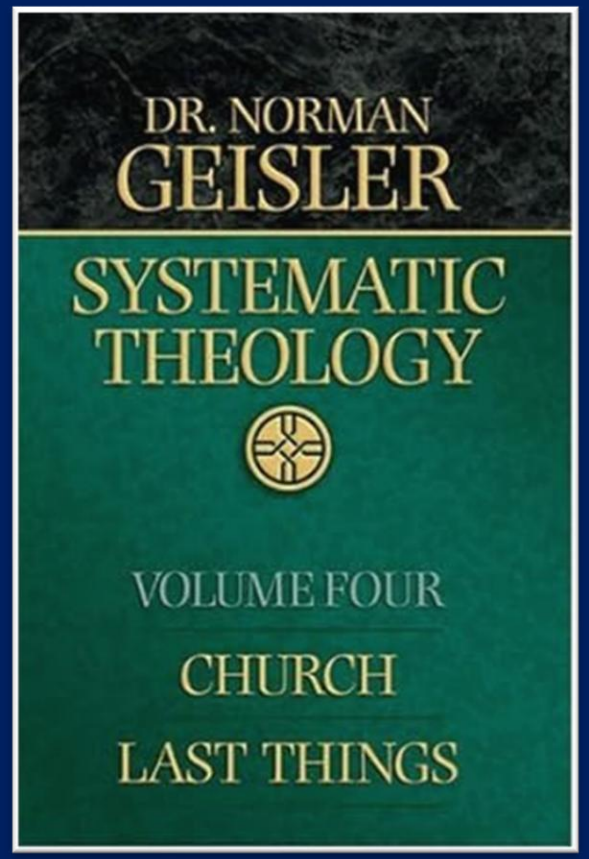
Prophecy Panorama




The 7 Churches in Revelation
Rev. 1: 11
BLACK SEA
BITHYNIA
MYSIA
AEGEAN SEA
ASIA
Pergamum
Thyatira
Smyrna
Sardis
Philadelphia
PHRYGIA
Ephesus
Laodicea
Patmos
CARIA
LYCIA
By: Gabriel Morris

Dr. Norman Geisler

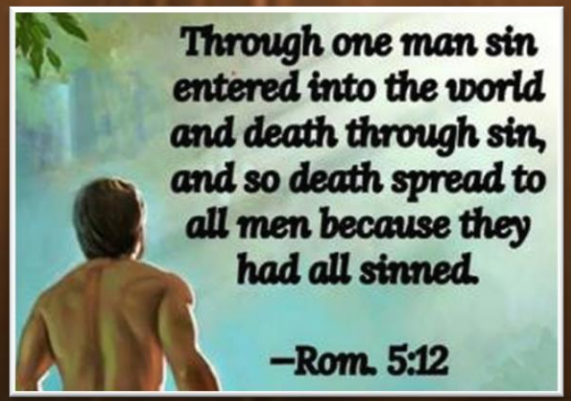
Geisler, N. L. (2005). *Systematic theology, volume four: church, last things* (p. 393). Bethany House Publishers.



- "For one thing, the second death is no more annihilation than is the first death. The first death is the separation of the soul from the body for a short time (until the resurrection), not the soul's annihilation; the second death is the separation of the body *and* soul from God forever."

Genesis 2:16-17

“16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely **die (*muwth*)**.’”



Ephesians 2:1-5

1 “And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins**, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”



Belief – God's One Condition for Justification

Gen 15:6

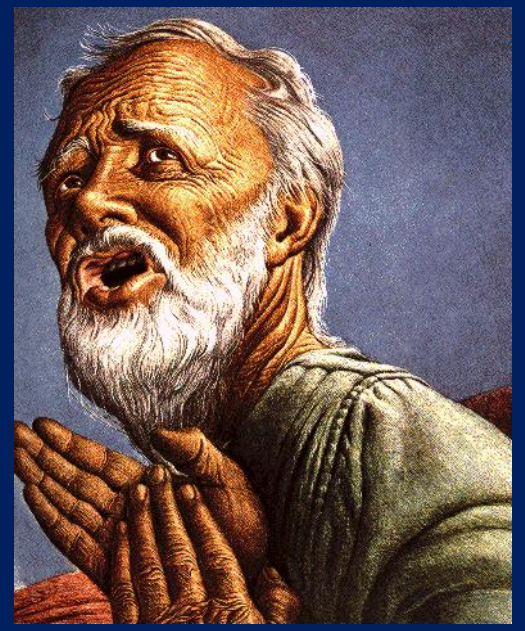
Then he **believed** in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Acts 16:30-31

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."



“Death” in the Old Testament

māwet: “Death is the consequences and the punishment of sin. It originated with sin. A grand theme of the Old Testament is God’s holiness, which **separates** Him from all that is in harmony with His character. Death, then, in the Old Testament means ultimate **separation** from God due to sin.”

Elmer B. Smick, “*māwet*," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris and Gleason L. Archer and Bruce K. Waltke(Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:1169.

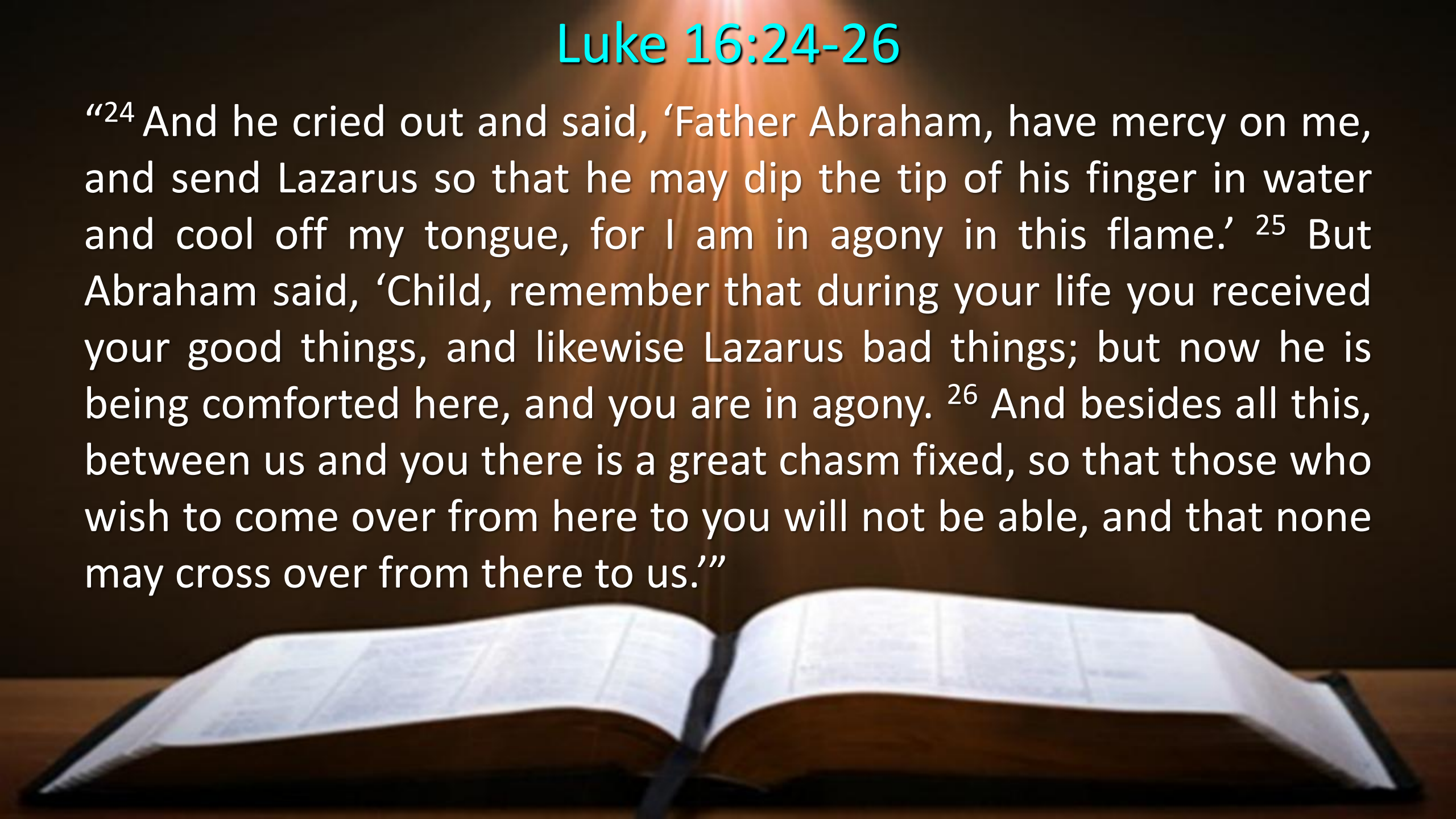
“Death” in the New Testament

thanatos: “that **separation** (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended.”

Joseph Henry Thayer, *Death - Thanatos*, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Being Grmm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 282.

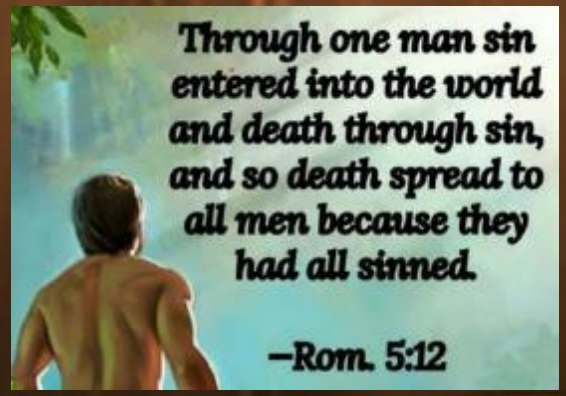
Luke 16:24-26

“[24] And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ [25] But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. [26] And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’”



Genesis 3:19

“By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”



IV. Answering Annihilationist Biblical Arguments

A. 2nd death (Rev. 20:14)

B. **Destroy (Rev. 11:18)**

C. Destruction (2 Thess. 1:9)

D. Burning up (Matt. 3:12)

E. Eternal results (Rev. 14:11)



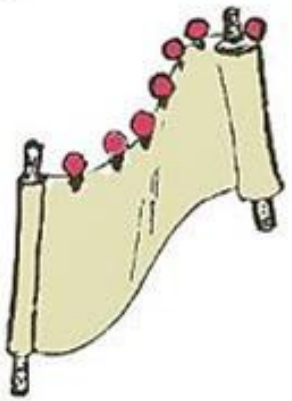
2 Corintians 4:16

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is **decaying**, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.”



Tribulation Judgments

Rapture



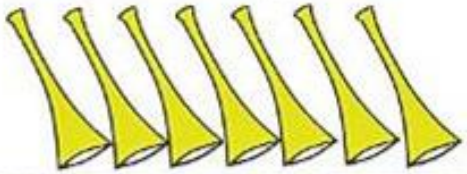
Seal Judgments
Revelation 6





Christ's Glorious Appearing

Revelation 8,9
Trumpet Judgments



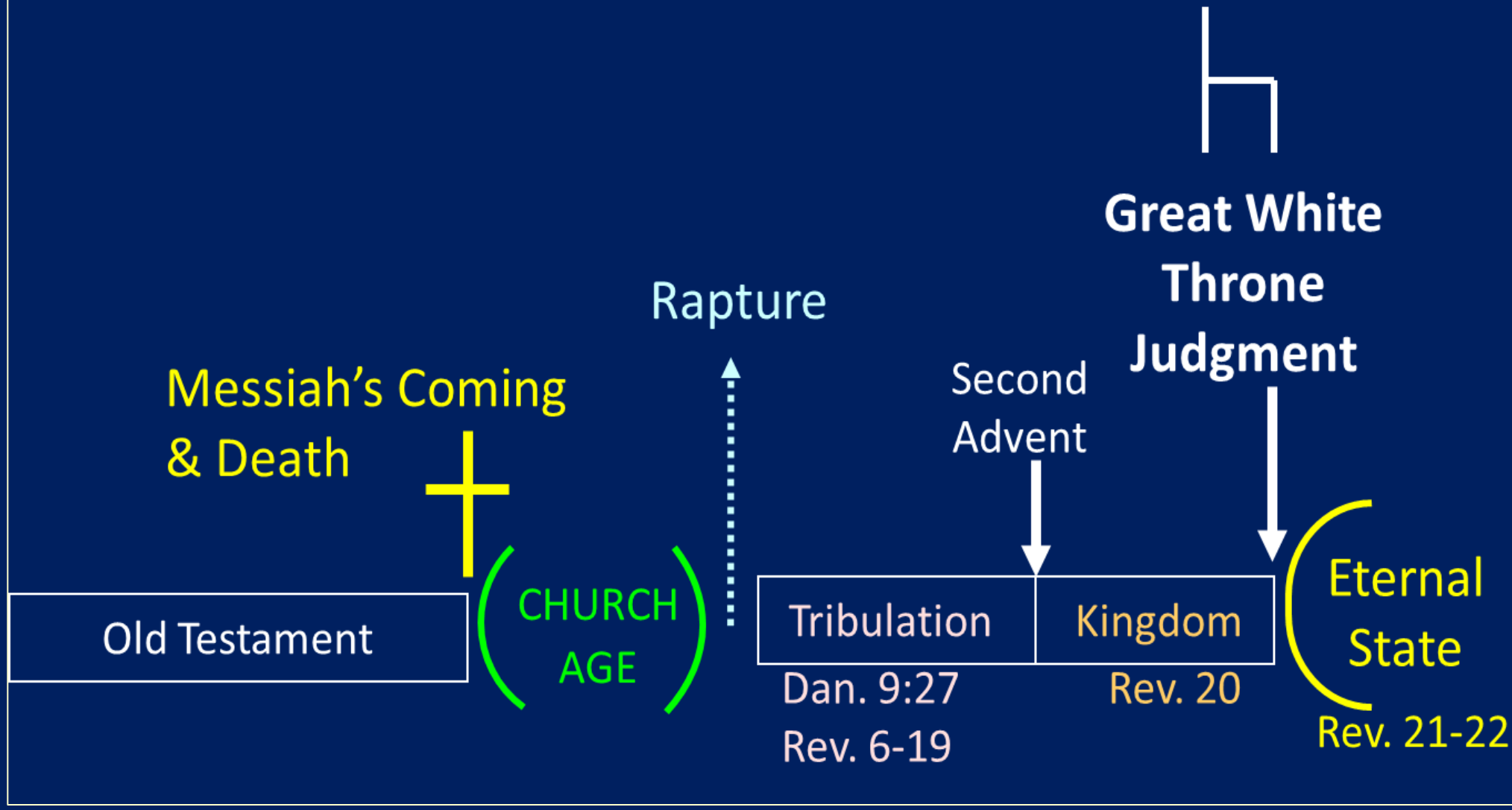
Bowl (or Vial) Judgments
Revelation 15,16



First Half of Tribulation

The Great Tribulation

Prophecy Panorama



Revelation 20:10

“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet **are** also; and they will be tormented day and night **forever (*aiōn*)** and **ever (*aiōn*)**.”



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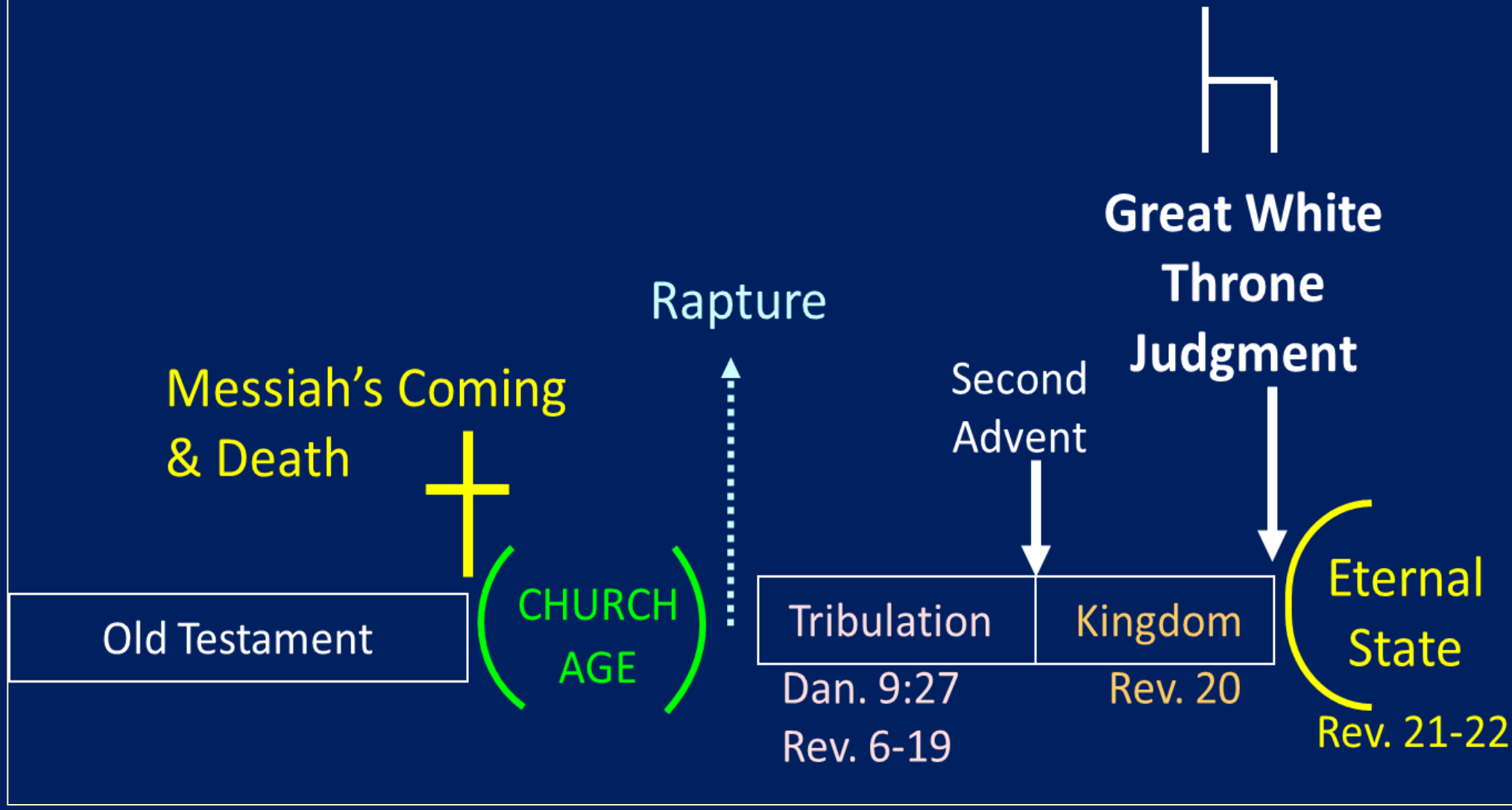
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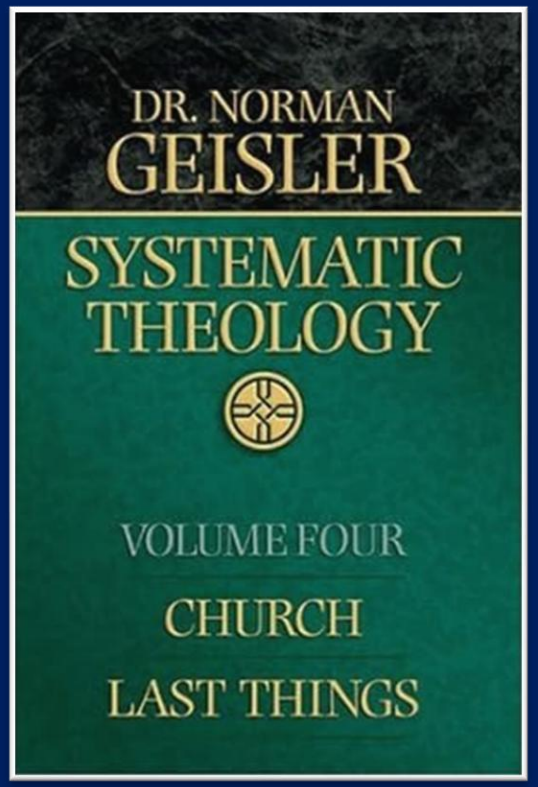


Prophecy Panorama



Dr. Norman Geisler

Geisler, N. L. (2005). *Systematic theology, volume four: church, last things* (p. 396). Bethany House Publishers.



"…the Bible uses several main pictures to speak of hell: (1) darkness, (2) separation, (3) weeping, (4) gnashing of teeth, (5) punishment, (6) fire, (7) death, and (8) destruction. The first five in no sense coalesce with the idea of annihilation; and, when properly understood in context, neither do the last three. As applied to hell, then, *destruction* clearly does not mean annihilation but connotes the punishment of something still in existence. *Punishment* is precisely what Paul called the action taken on the excommunicated man (using the same word—cf. 2 Cor. 2:6; 1 Cor. 5:5)."

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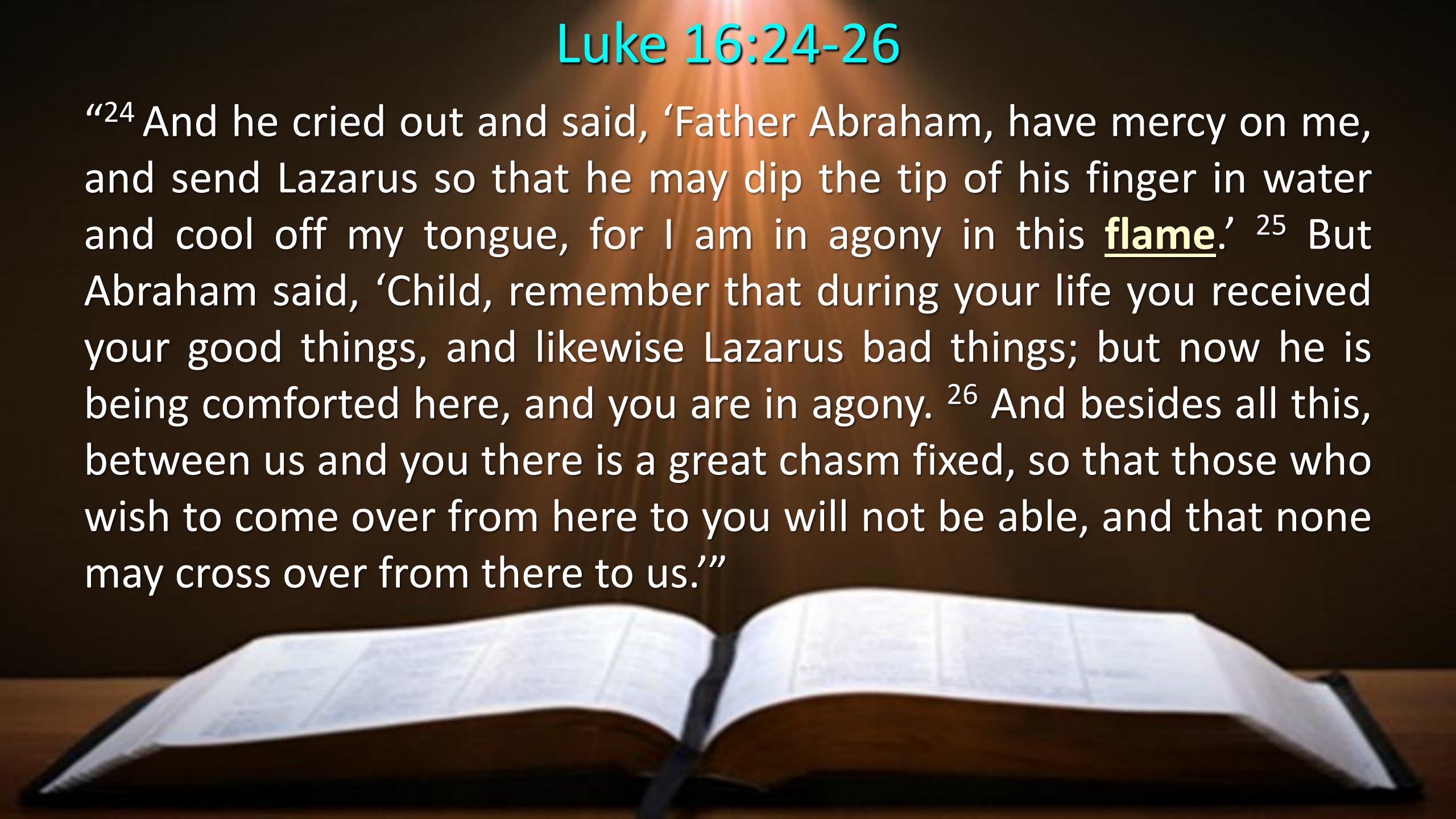
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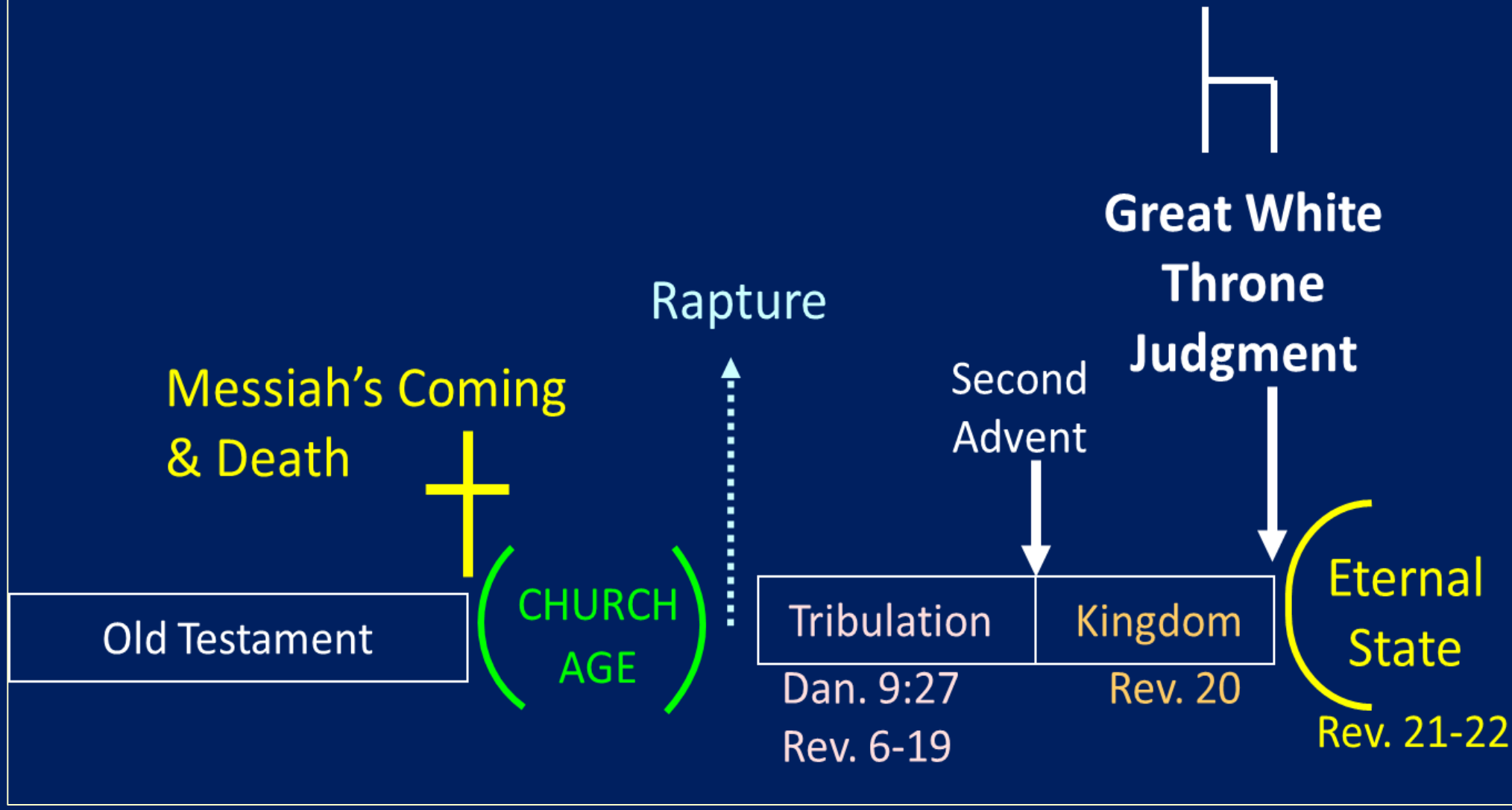


Luke 16:24-26

“[24] And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this **flame**.’ [25] But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. [26] And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’”



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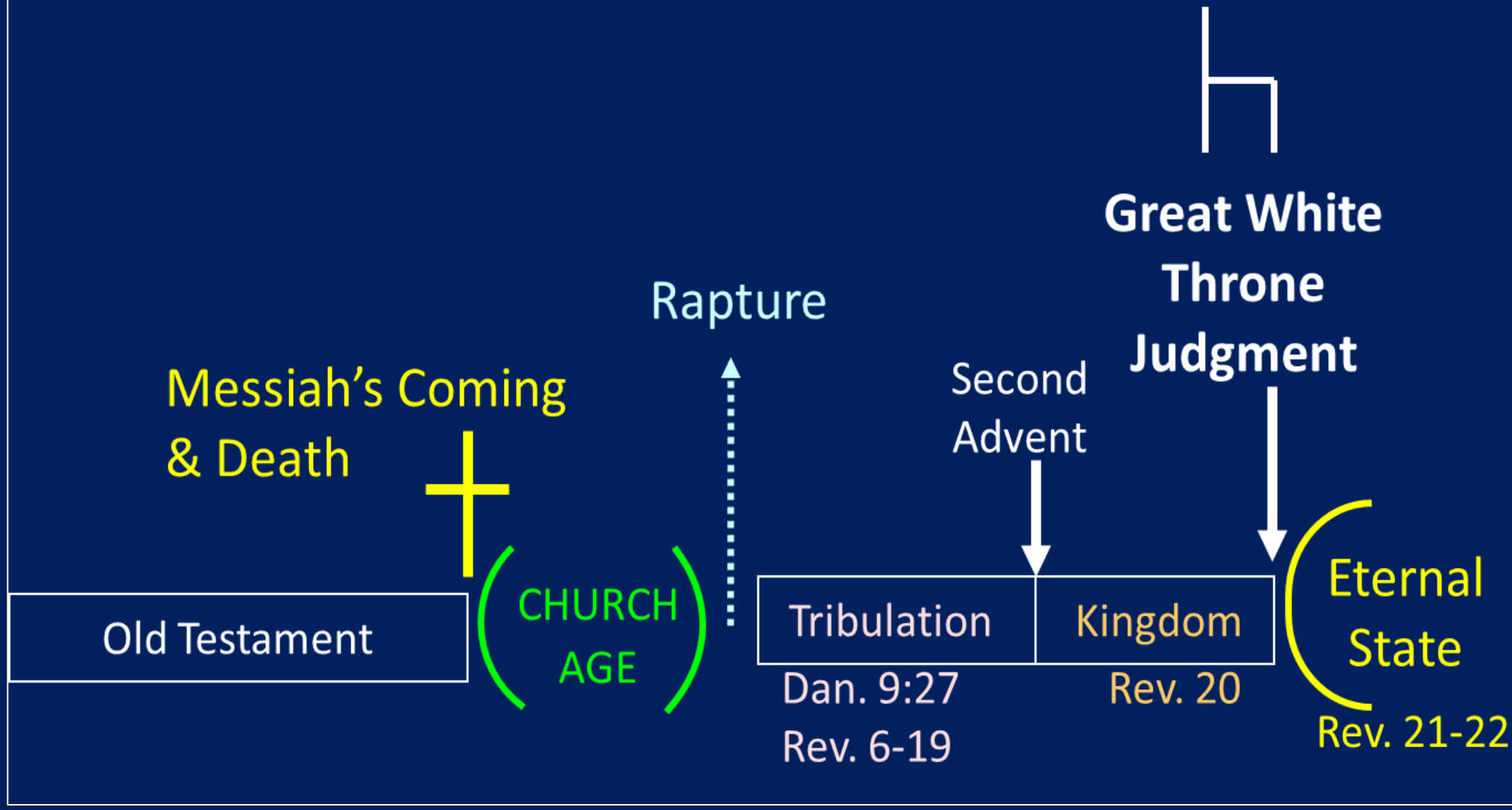


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E. **Eternal results (Rev. 14:11)**



Revelation 14:11

"And the **smoke** of their torment goes up **forever (*aiōn*)** and **ever (*aiōn*)**; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."



Revelation 14:11

"And the smoke of their **torment** goes up **forever (*aiōn*)** and **ever (*aiōn*)**; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."



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G. Better to have never been born (Mark 14:21)

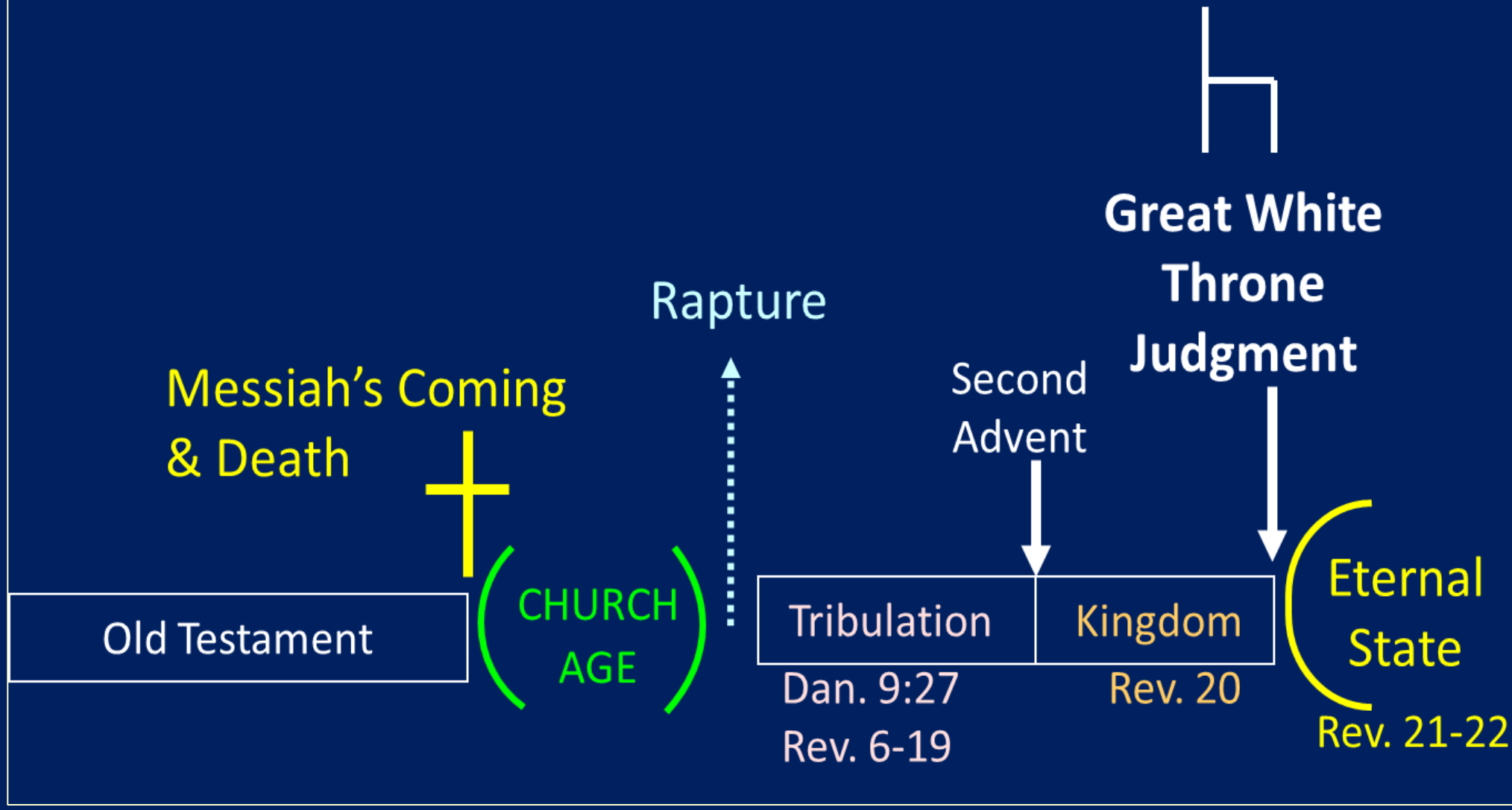
H. Wicked perishing (2 Pet. 3:9)

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Literal Interpretation

One Meaning

Plain Literal

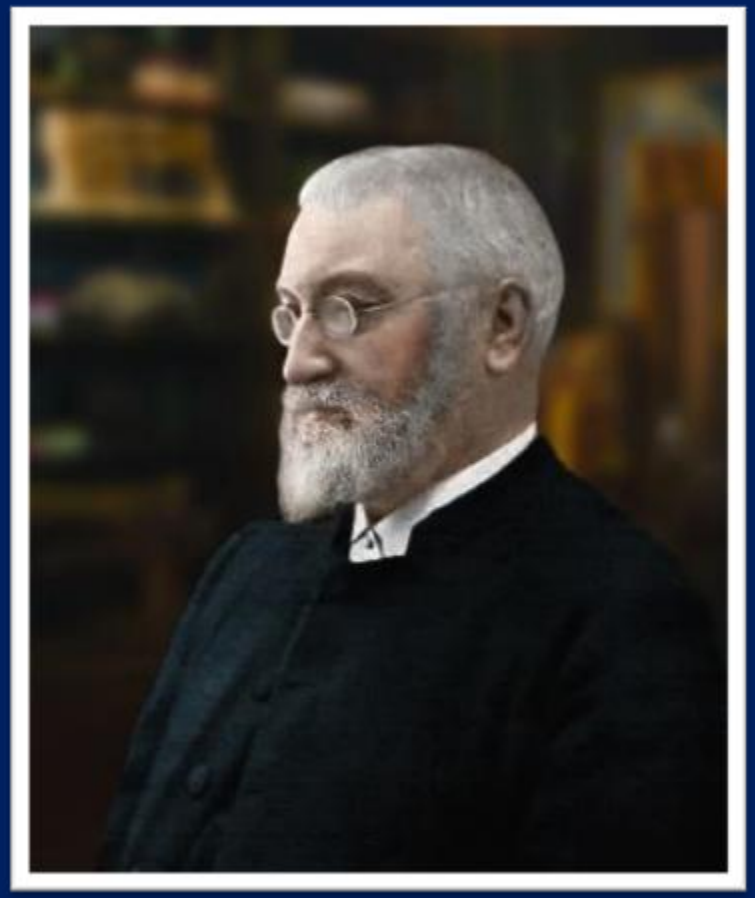
The literal interpretation is the explicit **assertion** of the words—DENOTATIVE

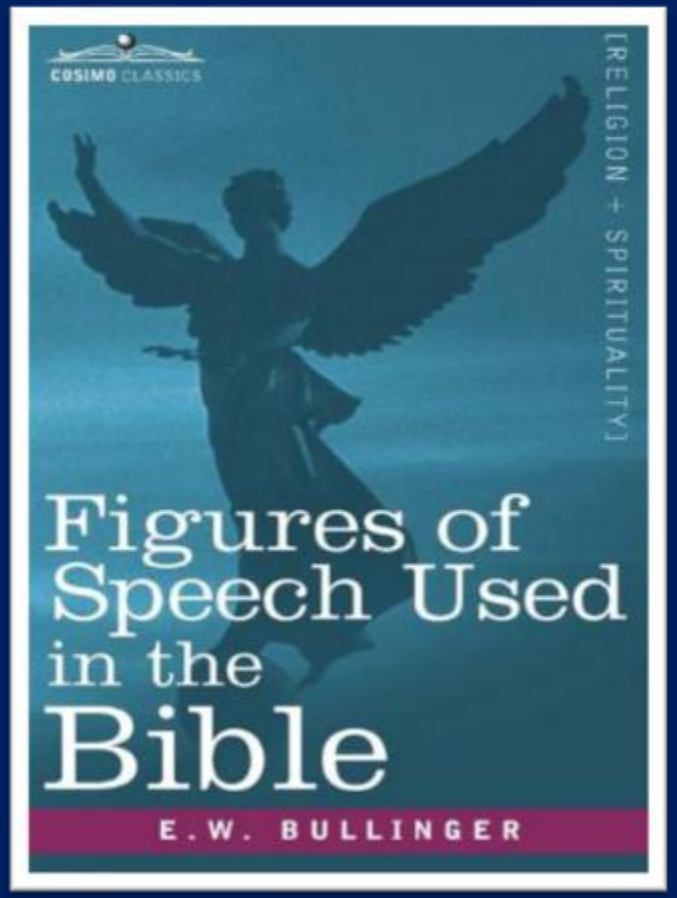
Figurative Literal

The literal interpretation is the specific **intention** of the figure—CONOTATIVE

Chart by Earl Radmacher

E.W. Bullinger (1837–1913)





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Belief – God's One Condition for Justification

Gen 15:6

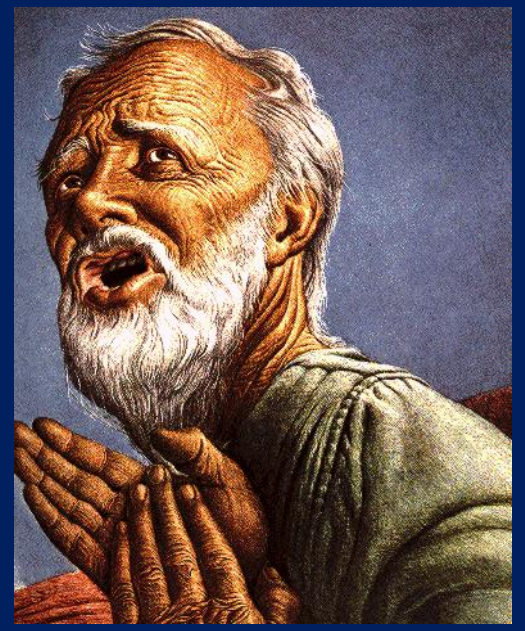
Then he **believed** in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Acts 16:30-31

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."



2 Peter 3:9

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to **perish** but for all to come to repentance."



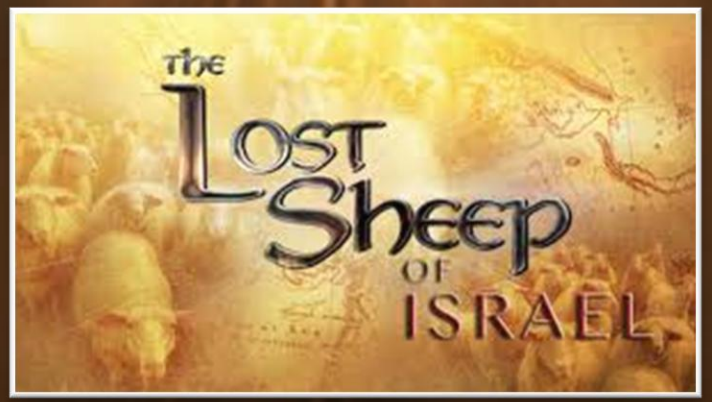
Matthew 10:5-7

“These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the **lost** sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”



Matthew 15:24

“But He answered and said, ‘I was sent only to the **lost** sheep of the house of Israel.’”



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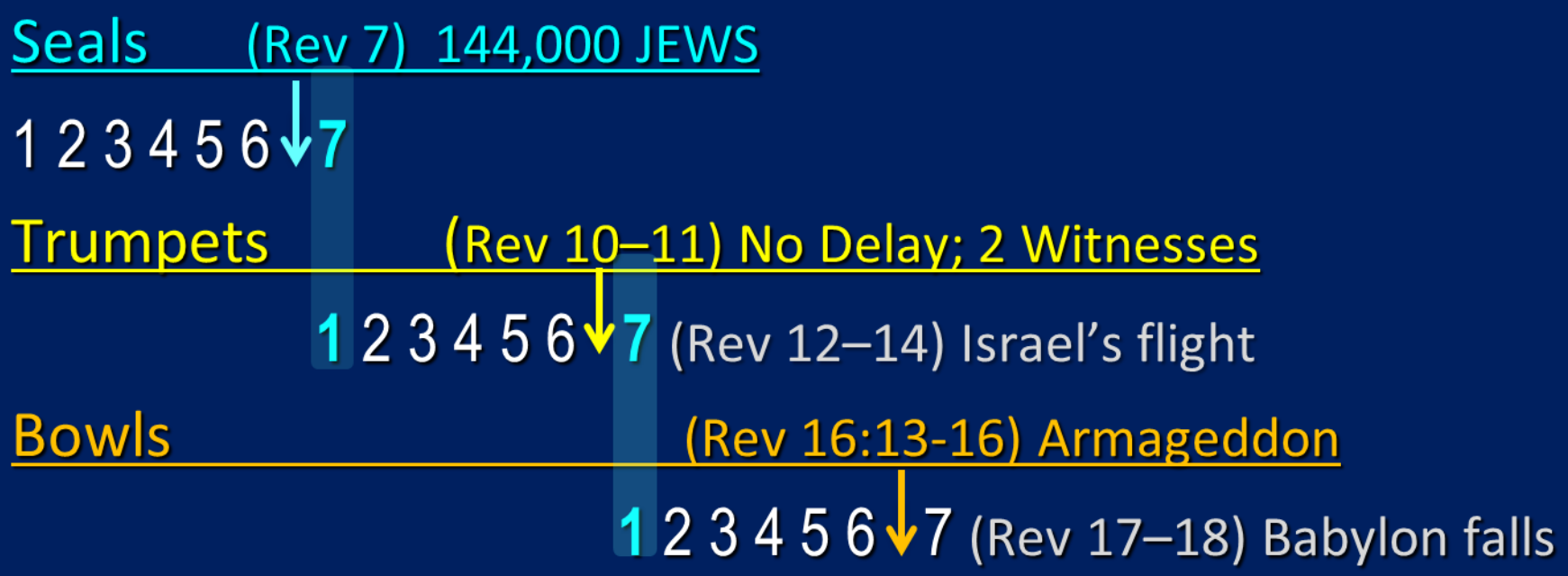
Revelation 3:5

PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMERS

"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not **erase** his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."



5 Non-Chronological Parenthetical Insertions



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H. Wicked perishing (2 Pet. 3:9)

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J. **Life activity suspended in death (Eccles. 9:10)**



Ecclesiastes 9:10

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.”



Psalm 146:4

"His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish."



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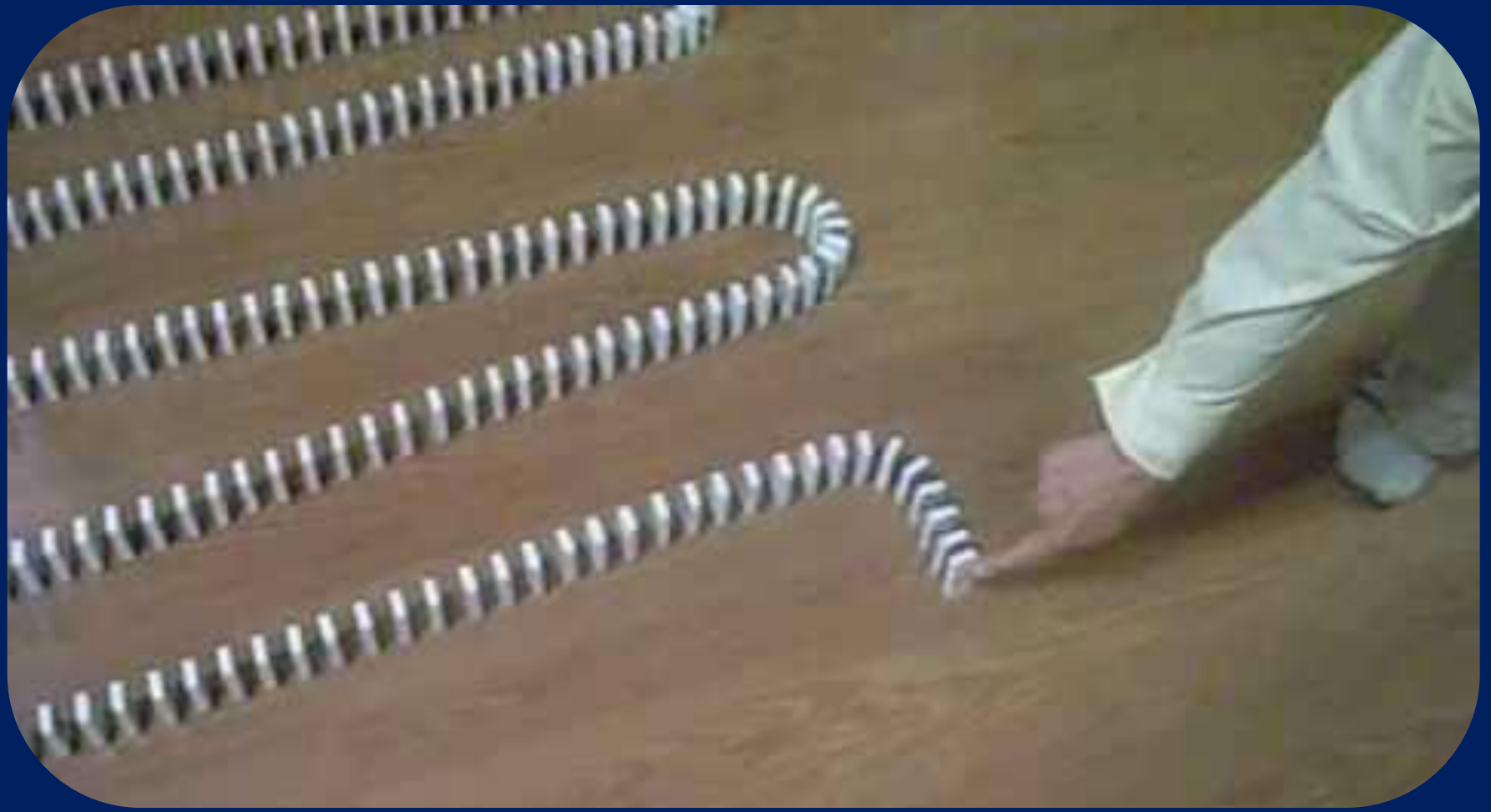
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Dominoes in a Row



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