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

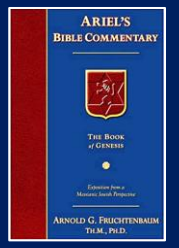
VII. Conclusion





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)

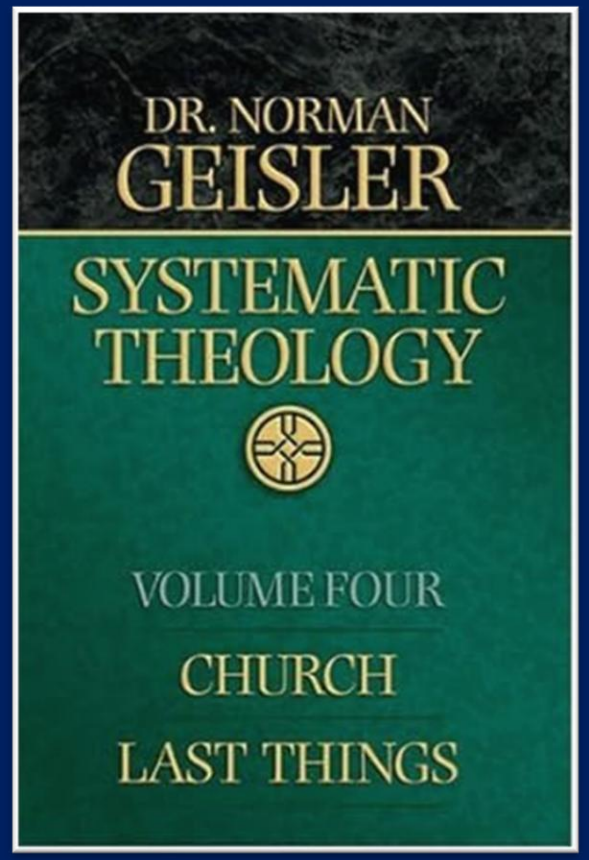
D. Burning up (Matt. 3:12)

E. Eternal results (Rev. 14:11)



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."

BORN ONCE DIE TWICE; BORN TWICE DIE ONCE

“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.

IV. Answering Annihilationist Biblical Arguments

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

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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.”



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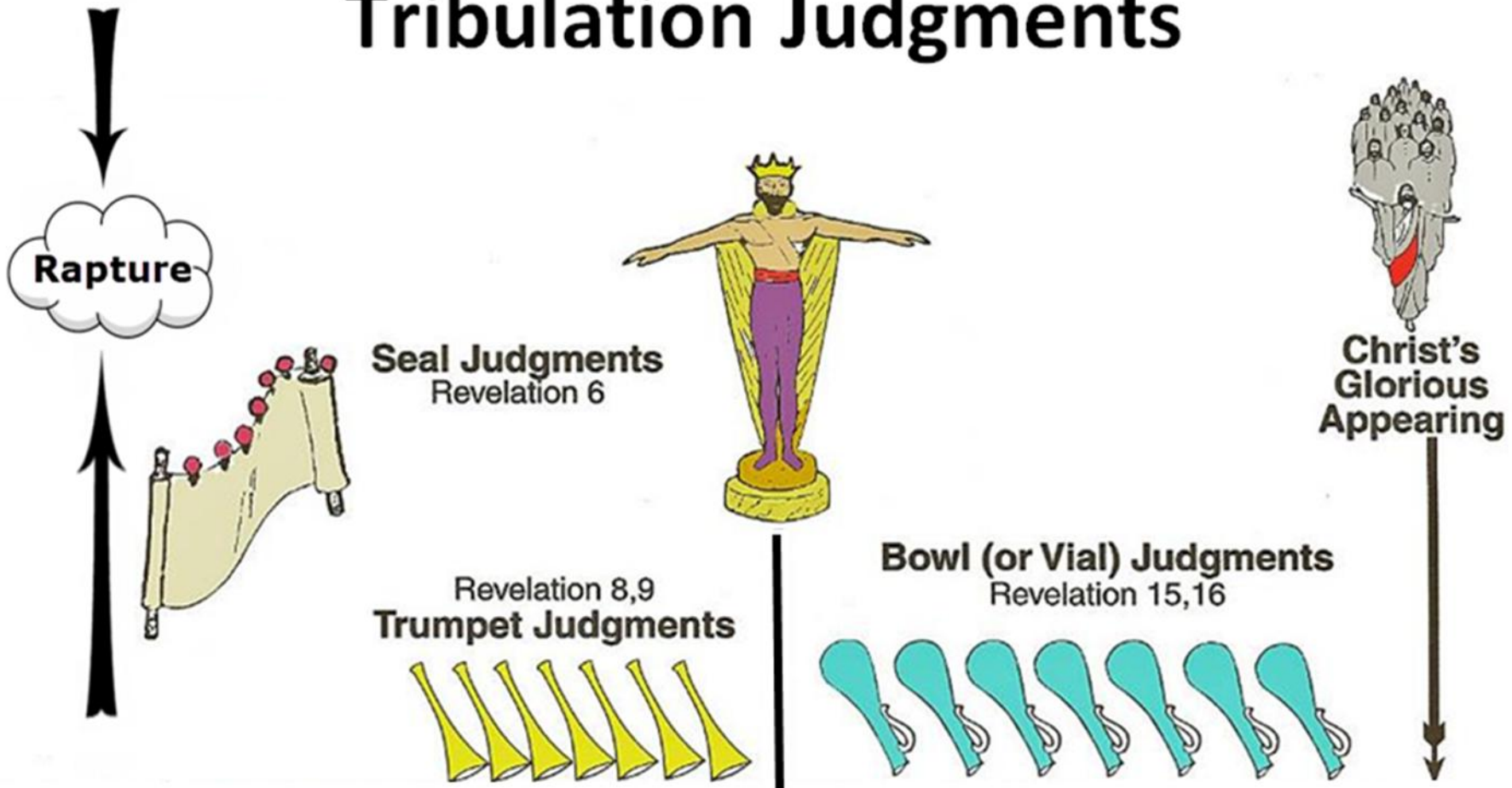
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Tribulation Judgments

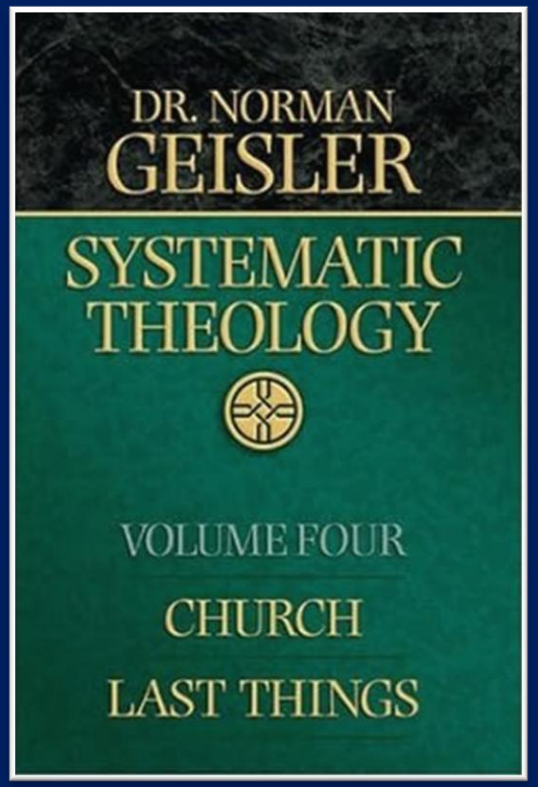


First Half of the Tribulation | Second Half of the Tribulation

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

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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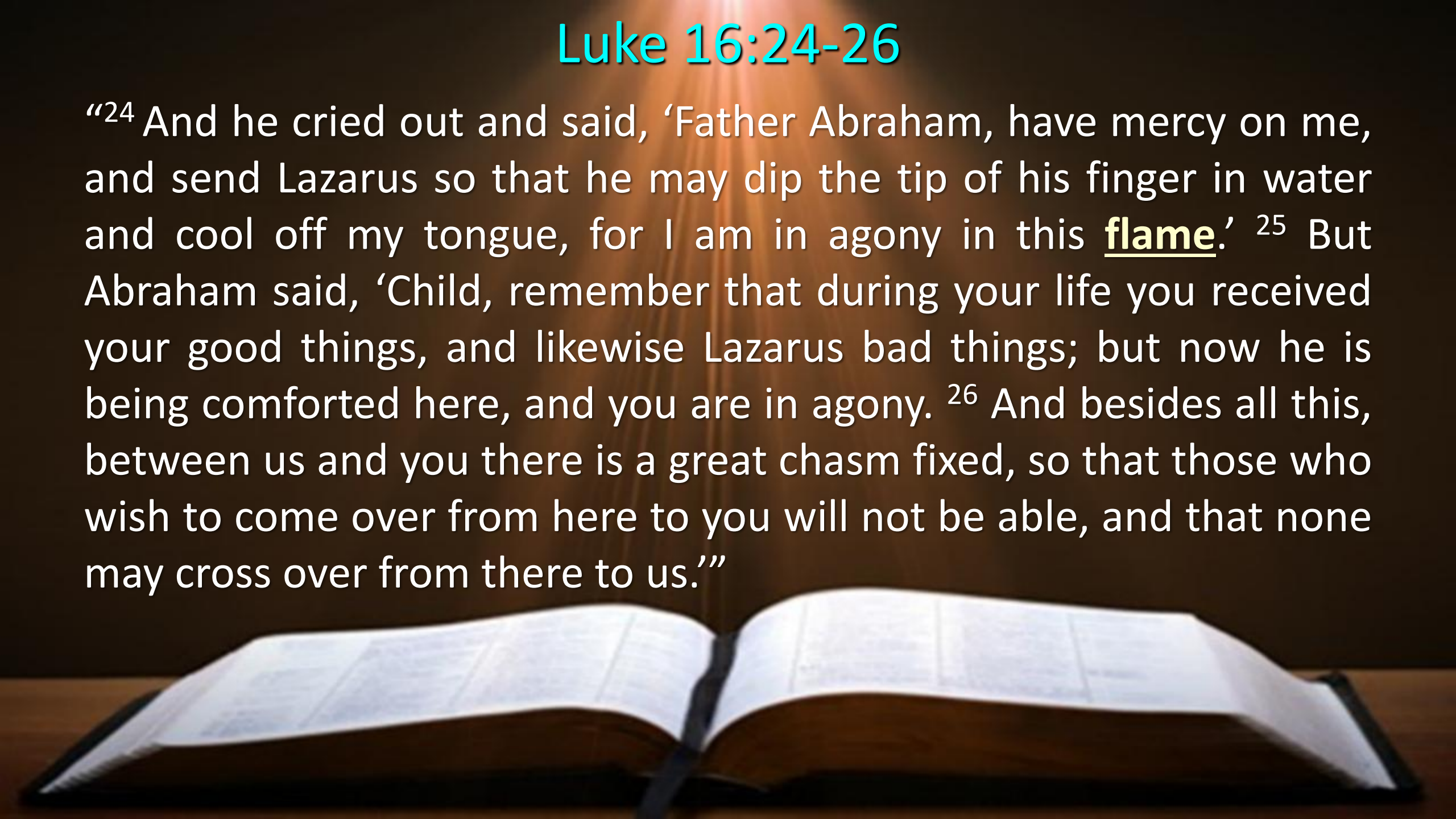
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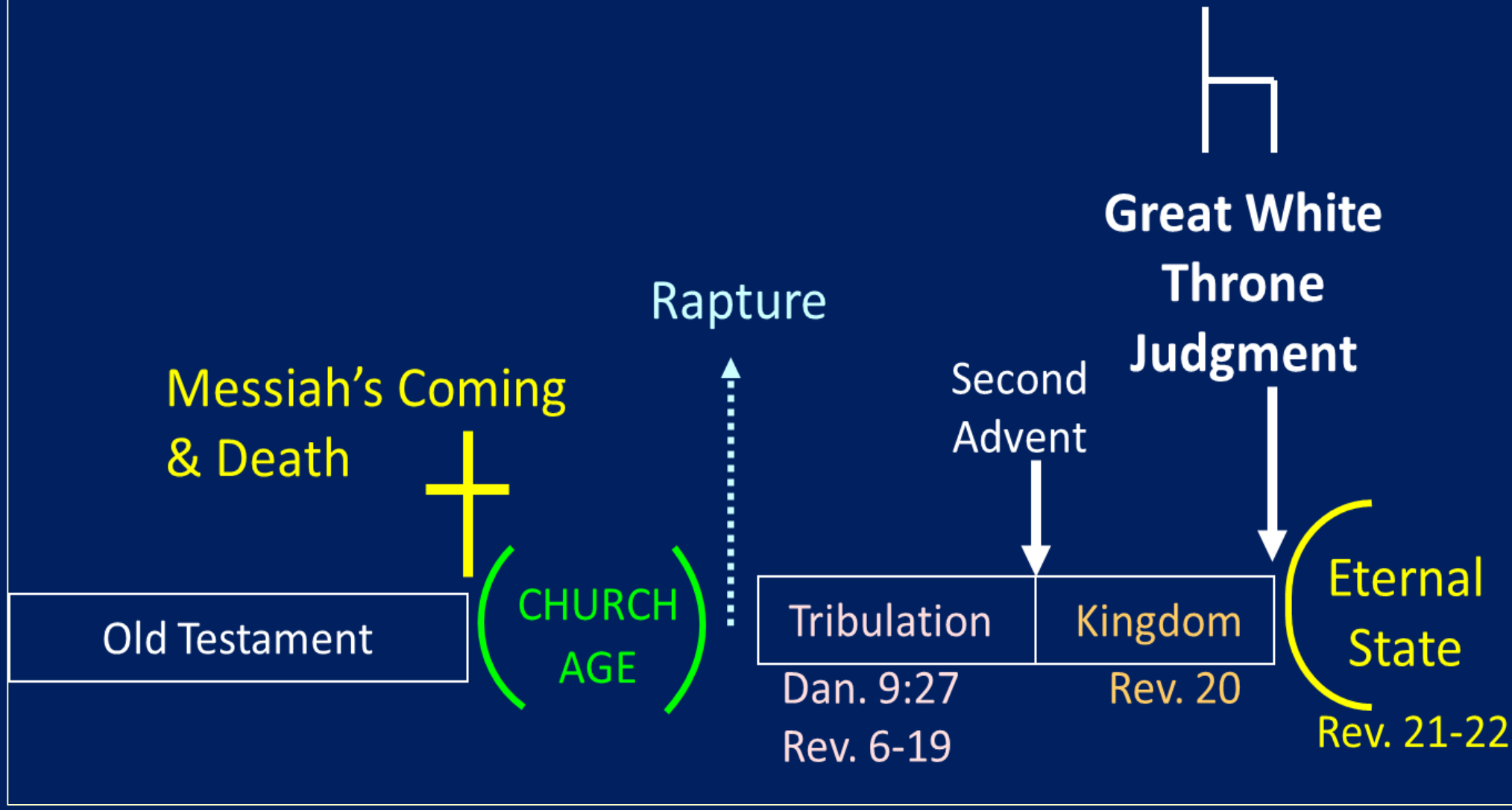


Luke 16:24-26

“[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.’”



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*)."

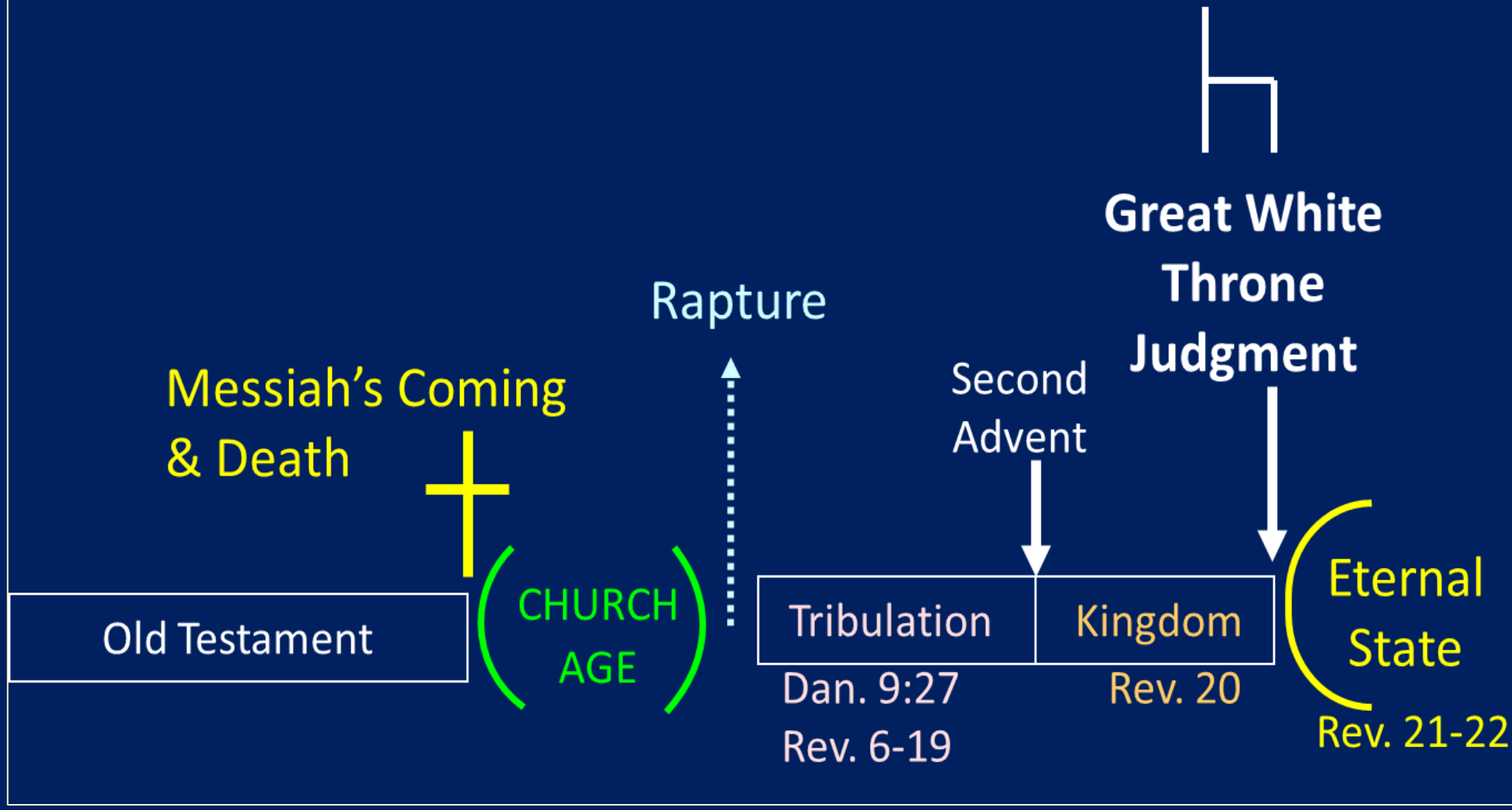


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Prophecy Panorama



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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."



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*)**."



IV. Answering Annihilationist Biblical Arguments

F. **Perdition (2 Pet. 3:7)**

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

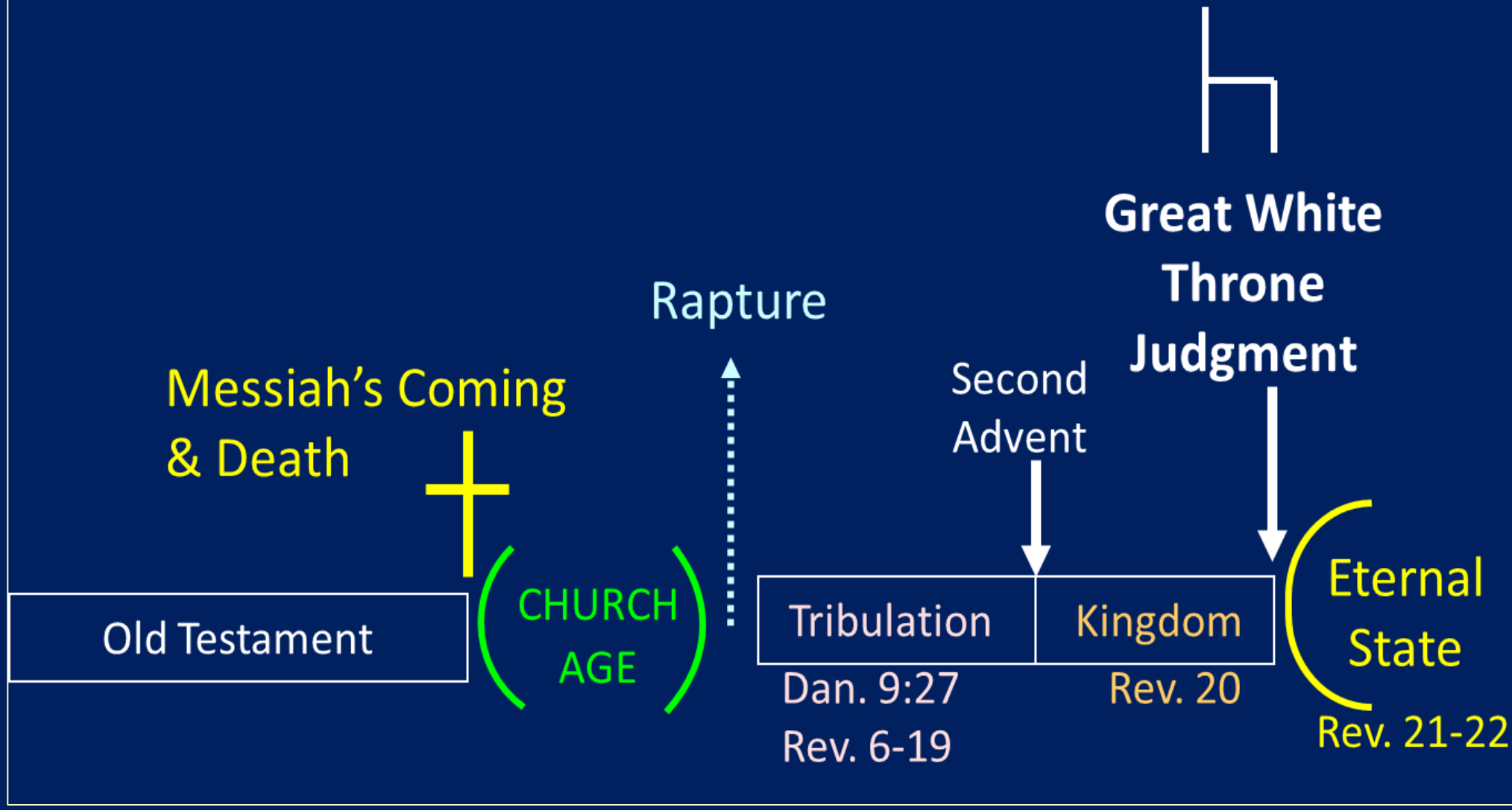
H. Wicked perishing (2 Pet. 3:9)

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

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



Prophecy Panorama



Revelation 20:10

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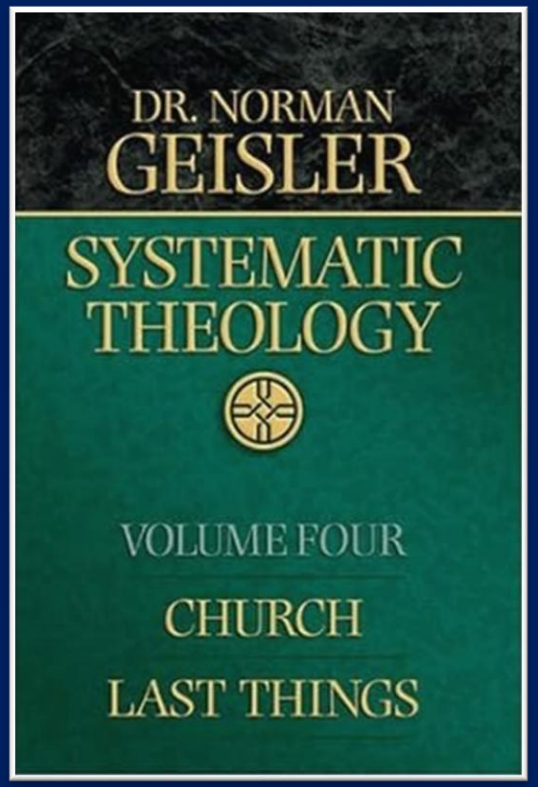
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"First of all, even if taken literally, Jesus' declaration is not a comparison of Judas's perdition to his nonexistence before conception; it is a comparison to his existence in the womb before he was born. Jesus did not say it would have been better if Judas had never been *conceived* but if he'd never been *born*."

Literal Interpretation

One Meaning

Plain Literal

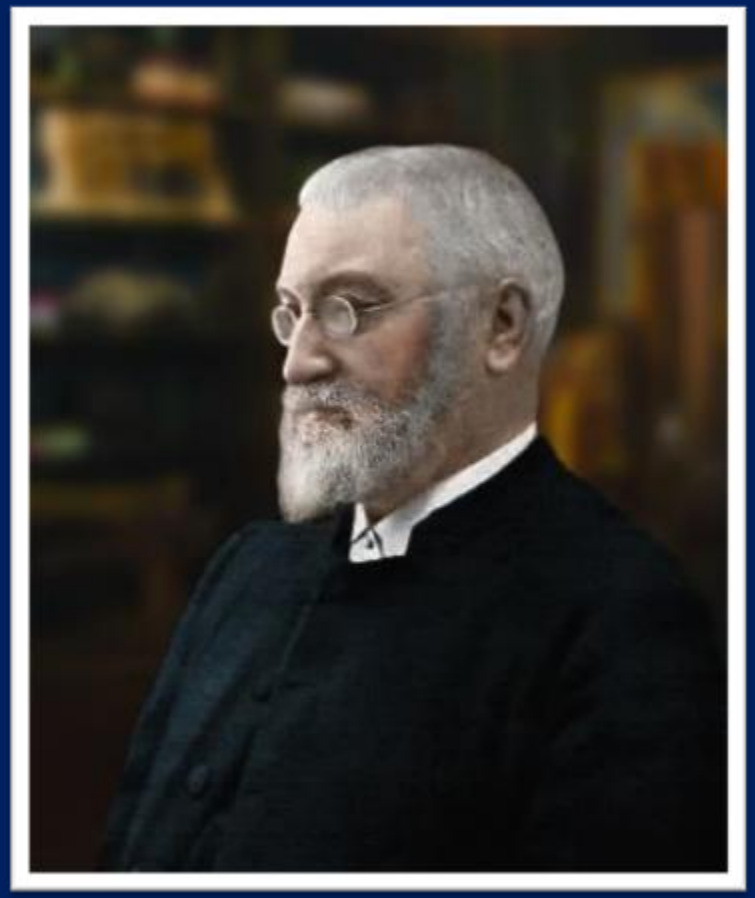
The literal interpretation is the explicit **assertion** of the words—DENOTATIVE

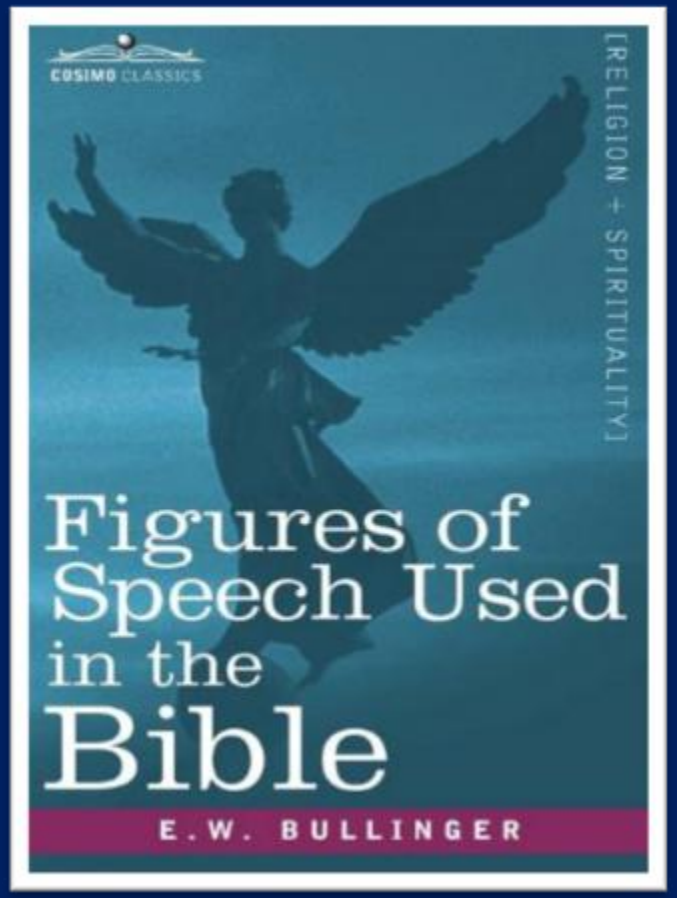
Figurative Literal

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

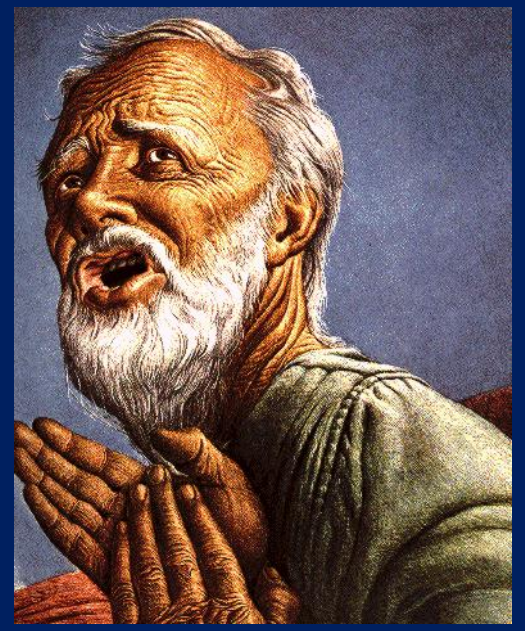
Then he **believed** in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

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."



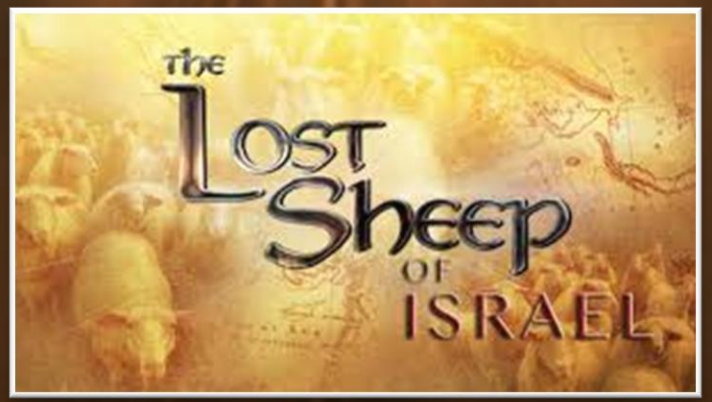
Matthew 10:5-7

“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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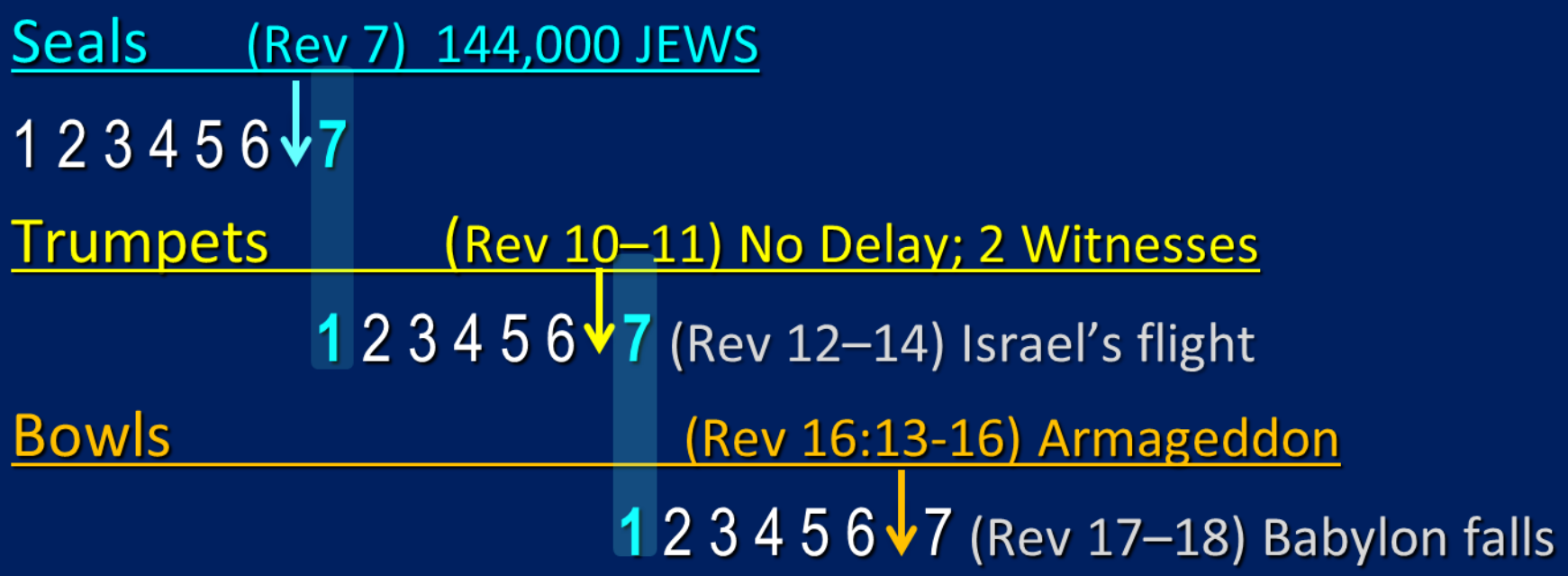
Revelation 3:5

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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Ecclesiastes 9:10

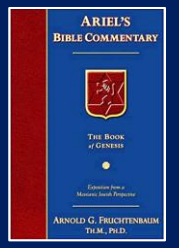
“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.”





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Footsteps of the Messiah, 713-14



"Ecclesiastes 9:5 does speak about *the dead* not knowing *any thing*, but the context of Ecclesiastes 9:5 is simply drawing the conclusion of human philosophy. Indeed, from the standpoint of human philosophy, *under the sun*, that is the way it looks (v. 6). But again, Ecclesiastes 9:5 simply spells out what human philosophy feels *under the sun*. It is not a divine decree; it is not a positive affirmation of the Word of God."

Psalm 146:4

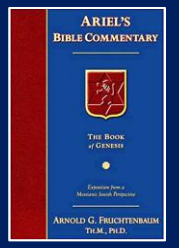
"His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish."





Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

Footsteps of the Messiah, 713



"Another Old Testament passage that they use is Psalm 146:4, where it states that a man's *thoughts perish* when he dies. But actually, verses 3 and 4 taken together and in context simply teach that a man's devices, man's plans, and man's thoughts cannot be carried out on the earth after physical death. He has lost any opportunity to see his plans carried out; it does not teach a cessation of existence."

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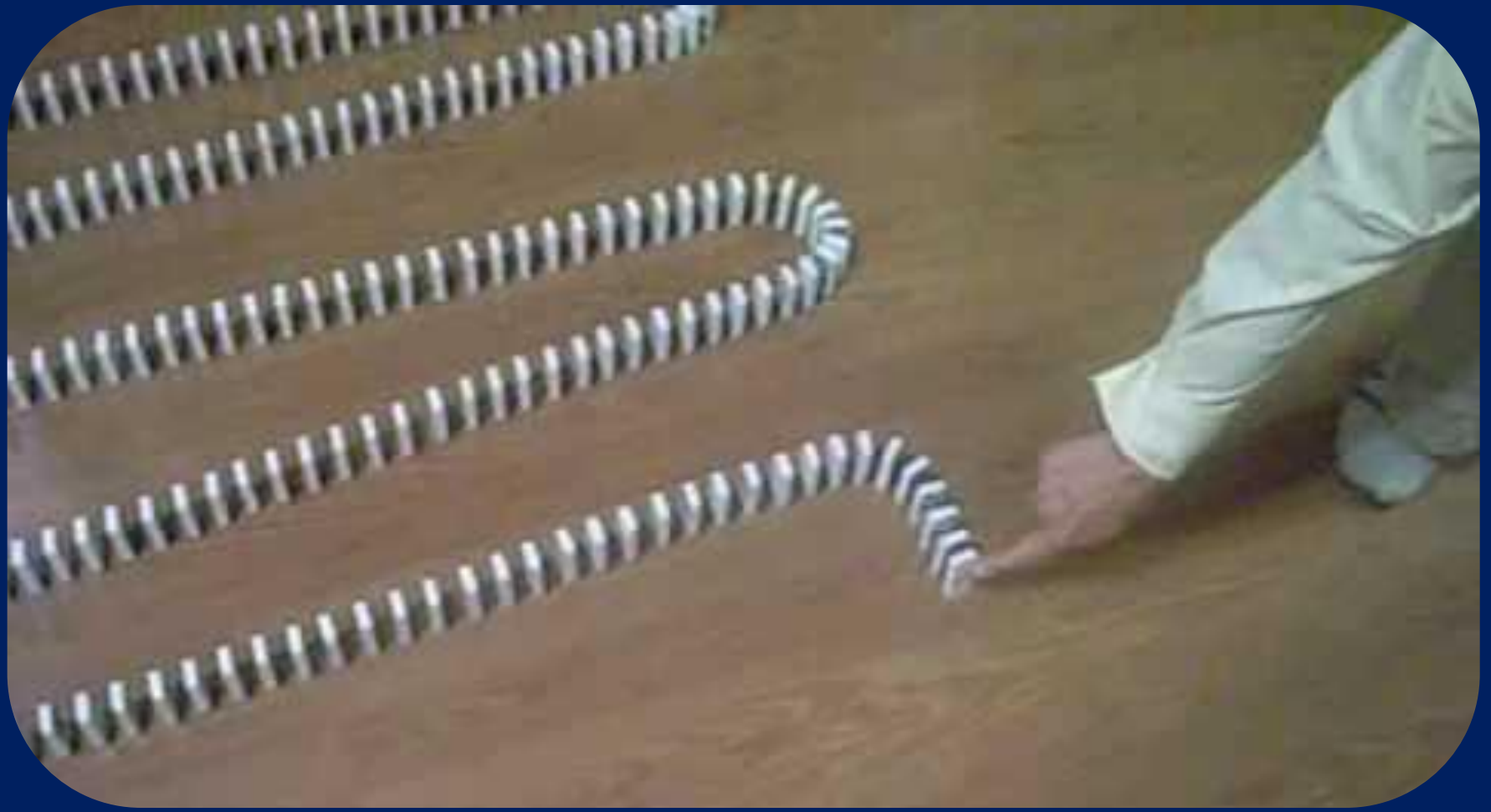
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Dominoes in a Row



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