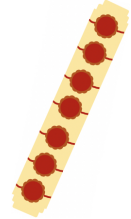


# Lesson 51: The Kingdom of Man Destroyed

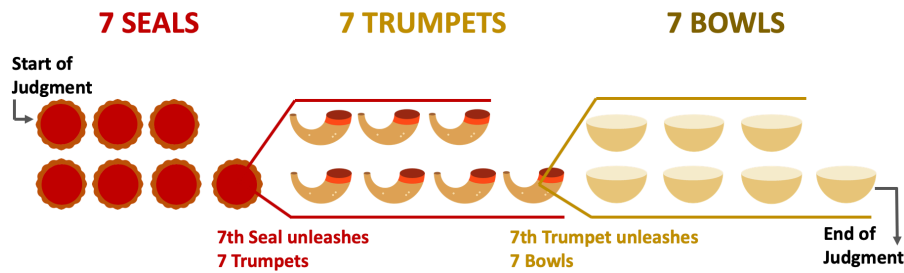
## Previously...

We have been studying God's final revelation to mankind about how human history ends.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the rightful King of the Kingdom of God. After He receives the inheritance scroll from the Father, He breaks open the seven seals one by one, releasing judgment on the earth.



These judgments are physical, affecting not just mankind, but also earth, space and the spiritual realm. God is judging the entire universe!





While this Tribulation period is focused on disciplining Israel and making the Jews come to faith in their Messiah, we also see the Kingdom of Man finally judged once and for all.

Jesus explains to John what is happening in heaven and in the spiritual world, and also shows him how it plays out on earth. This is what we have covered so far.

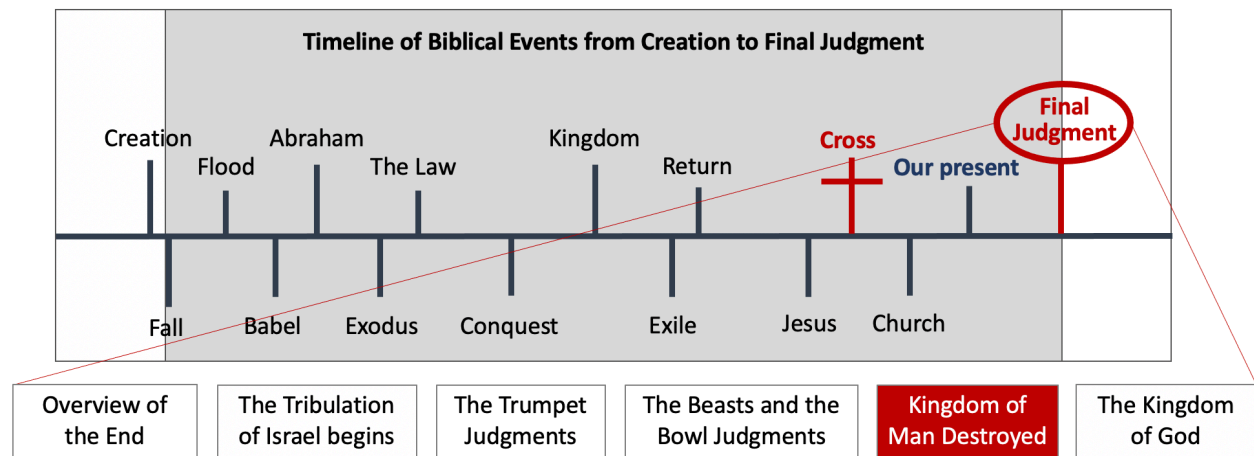


Through all the events of the Tribulation, the Bible makes it clear that Yahweh is in complete and sovereign control.

He is allowing the Antichrist to rise to power. He is forcing the world to choose whom it will believe and serve as the rightful King: the Antichrist, or the true Christ—Jesus, the Son of God.

<p align="center"><b>Pagan Kingdom of Man</b> Based on WORKS Man would save himself through his own ideas</p>	<p align="center"><b>Kingdom of God</b> Based on GRACE God would save man</p>
	

But God isn't done showing John what is to come.



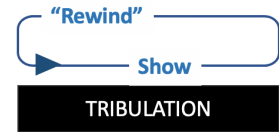
One more very important event that Jesus wants all the churches to know about is the fall of Babylon.



## D. Jesus Describes the Fall of Babylon and His 2nd Coming

### The Fall of Babylon

This is another “rewind and show” where Jesus explains the Tribulation from Babylon’s perspective.



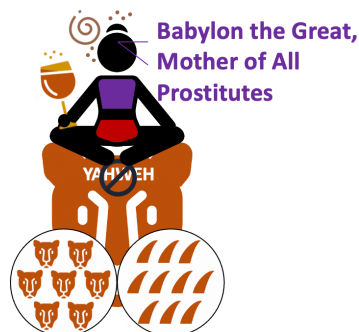
#### Revelation 17:1–18

<sup>1</sup> One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. “Come with me,” he said, “and I will show you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who rules over many waters. <sup>2</sup> The kings of the world have committed adultery with her, and the people who belong to this world have been made drunk by the wine of her immorality.”



<sup>3</sup> So the angel took me in the Spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and blasphemies against God were written all over it.

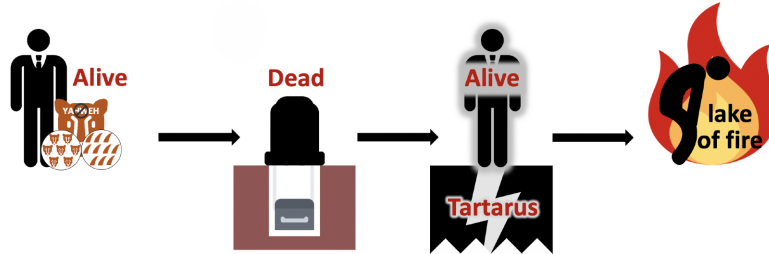
<sup>4</sup> The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls. In her hand she held a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality. <sup>5</sup> A mysterious name was written on her forehead: “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.” <sup>6</sup> I could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God’s holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.



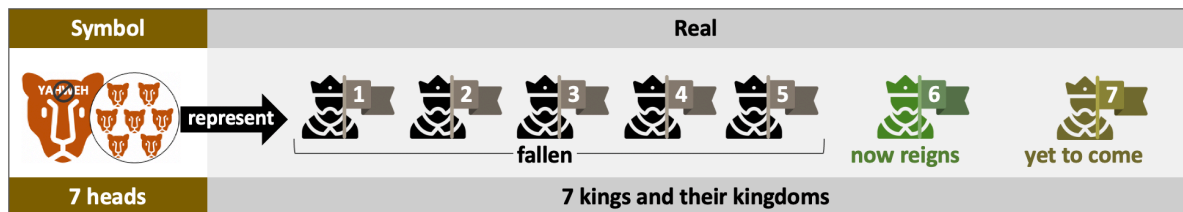
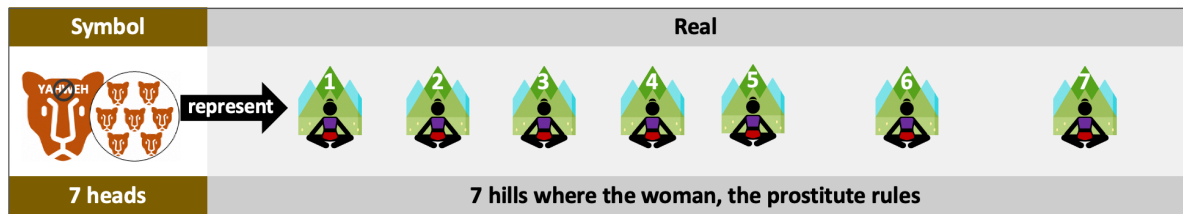
<sup>7</sup> “Why are you so amazed?” the angel asked. “I will tell you the mystery of this woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns on which she sits.

**Note:** Verses in blue indicate the study moving ahead verse by verse through Revelation.

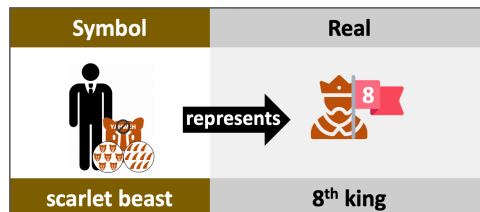
<sup>8</sup> The beast you saw was once alive but isn't now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit and go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world, whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made, will be amazed at the reappearance of this beast who had died.



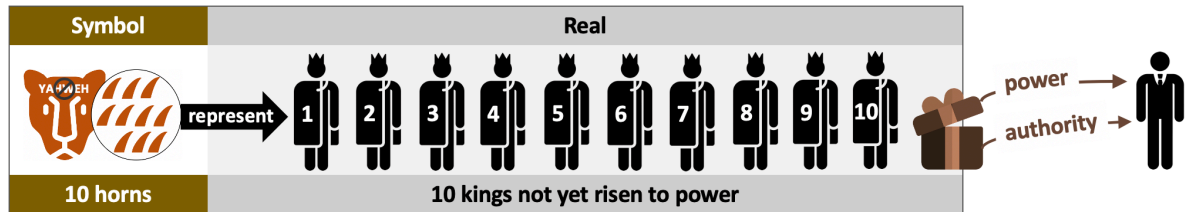
<sup>9</sup> “This calls for a mind with understanding: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills where the woman rules. They also represent seven kings. <sup>10</sup> Five kings have already fallen, the sixth now reigns, and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be brief.



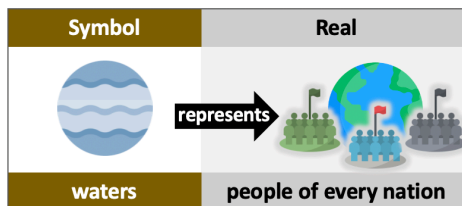
<sup>11</sup> “The scarlet beast that was, but is no longer, is the eighth king. He is like the other seven, and he, too, is headed for destruction.



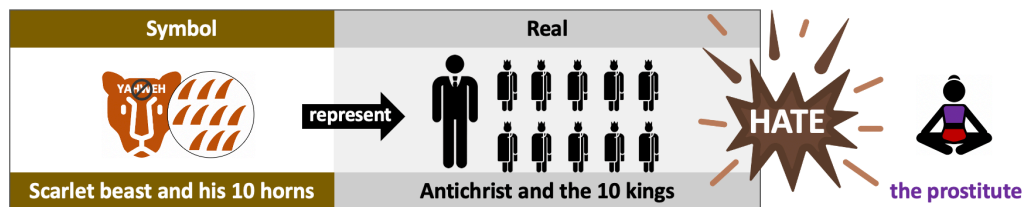
<sup>12</sup> The ten horns of the beast are ten kings who have not yet risen to power. They will be appointed to their kingdoms for one brief moment to reign with the beast. <sup>13</sup> They will all agree to give him their power and authority. <sup>14</sup> Together they will go to war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord of all lords and King of all kings. And his called and chosen and faithful ones will be with him.”



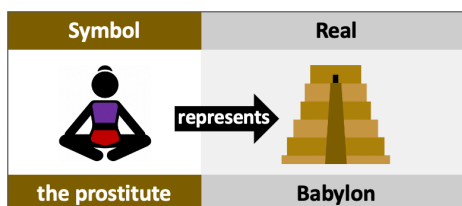
<sup>15</sup> Then the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language.”



<sup>16</sup> The scarlet beast and his ten horns all hate the prostitute. They will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire. <sup>17</sup> For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out his purposes. They will agree to give their authority to the scarlet beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled.



<sup>18</sup> And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the world.”



John is shown a whole lot of information about what happens to Babylon (the woman) and the Antichrist (the scarlet beast) during the first half of the Tribulation!



But what exactly is Babylon and why is it important?

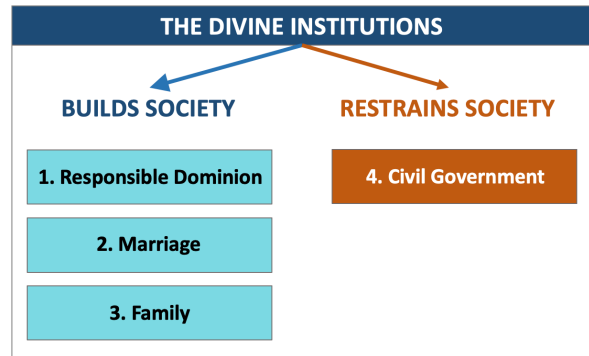


# 1. Babylon

We first learnt about Babylon in Genesis 10–11. God had “restarted” mankind with believing Noah and his family with the global Flood. And to help them deal with the realities of evil, God had given them a fourth divine institution: civil government (Lesson 6). This was to restrain evil within their society.

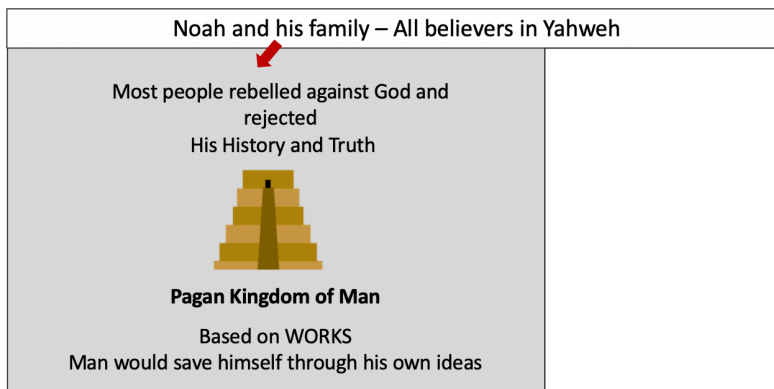
However, instead of obeying and worshipping Yahweh, most of Noah’s descendants refused to acknowledge Him.

God had instructed them to multiply and fill the earth. But in defiance, they did the exact opposite. They perverted civil government by organising themselves, not to limit evil, but to rebel against God by building a tower in the city of Babel or Babylon (Lesson 7).



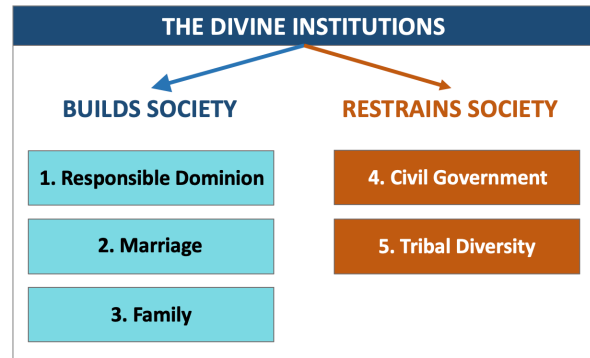
They chose to be their own ultimate authority and the tower represented their rebellion. They were trying to dominate the world by building a Kingdom of Man, all without God’s interference.

## How Civilisation became Paganised



Because of this rebellion, God scattered them into different nations and language groups by introducing the fifth divine institution: tribal diversity. This was to prevent mankind from continually organising themselves into one anti-God world government.

However, despite God scattering mankind, people never really gave up on their “Babel fantasy”, the idea that mankind is the ultimate authority and can successfully dominate and rule the world without God.



Later on, when King Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon became the leading empire, all its kings ruled in the same way—they were defiant towards Yahweh. The religious life and the economic system of Babylon was the total opposite of what God intended for mankind.

They were repeating the same evil pattern of the original Babel by perverting civil government and using the power of the sword, not to limit evil but to gain world domination. They were intent on building the Kingdom of Man. Each king wanted to become the “king of kings”, the supreme king over all the nations.

“Babylon” (other names include “Babel”, “Shinar”, etc.) is the second-most mentioned city in the Bible. It’s mentioned 290 times. And most of the time, it’s referring to the actual place.

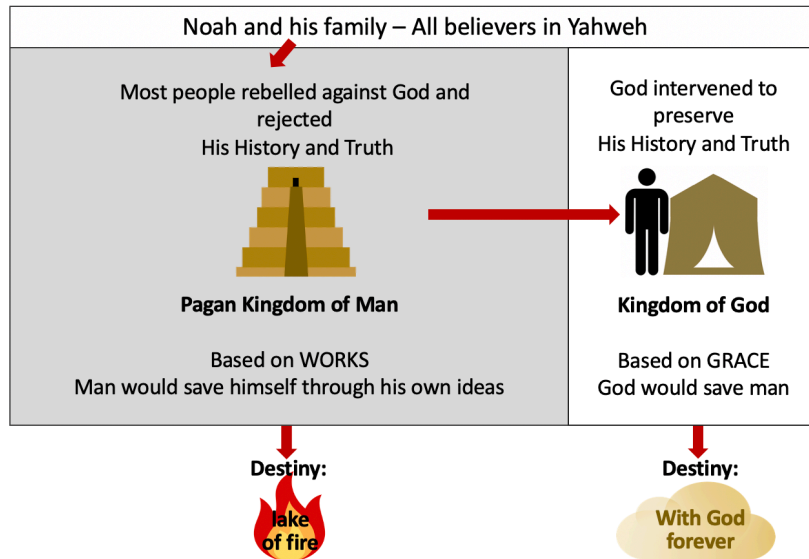


But the picture that the Bible gives of Babylon is a very bad one: it represents greed, sexual immorality, false religion and a complete rebellion of mankind against their Creator.

At the Tower of Babel, if God had left all mankind to their own wicked ways, they would have continually ignored Yahweh and instead, further taught and convinced each other of the fatal lie: that mankind can save themselves through their own works. Such false thinking and beliefs would seal their destiny and doom in the lake of fire.

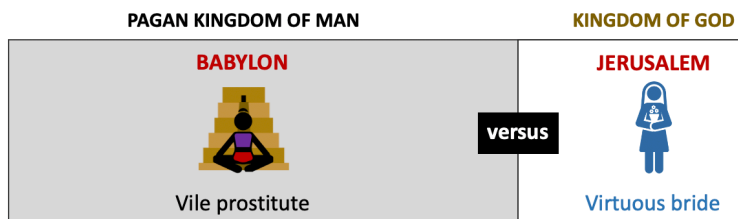
However, in His mercy, grace and compassion, God intervened in history. He called Abraham and the nation of Israel to preserve His truth and be His witnesses to the world (Isaiah 43:10–12).

**How God Intervened**



The Bible often uses the city of “Jerusalem” to refer to the Kingdom of God as opposed to Babylon, the Kingdom of Man.

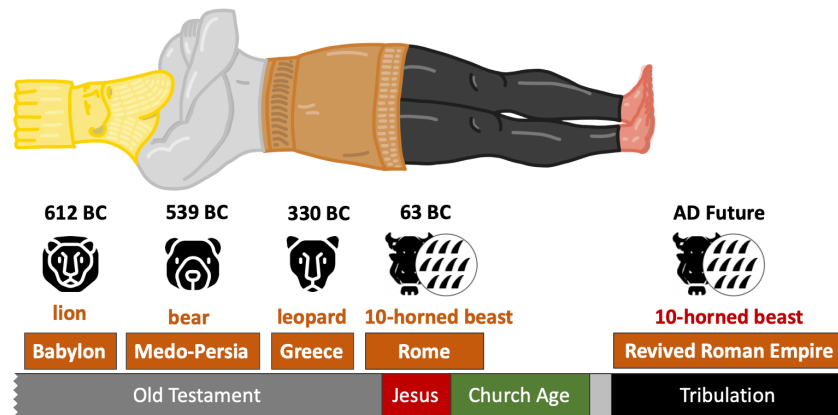
Jerusalem is the most mentioned city in the Bible (802 times). While Babylon is pictured as a vile prostitute (Revelation 17–18), Jerusalem, representing the Kingdom of God, is pictured as a virtuous bride (Revelation 21–22).





## Where is Babylon today?

Following what God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel regarding the future kingdoms of man, Babylon was overtaken by Medo-Persia around 539 BC. Babylon has not been in existence since then.



However, 20 years after the fall of Babylon, God gave the prophet Zechariah a vision of the future when evil would return to its original place in Babylon. Zechariah saw a woman named “Wickedness” who is carried to Babylon.

### Zechariah 5:5–11

<sup>5</sup> Then the angel who was talking with me came forward and said, “Look up and see what’s coming.”

<sup>6</sup> “What is it?” I asked.

He replied, “It is a basket for measuring grain, and it’s filled with the sins of everyone throughout the land.”

<sup>7</sup> Then the heavy lead cover was lifted off the basket, and there was a woman sitting inside it. <sup>8</sup> The angel said, “The woman’s name is Wickedness,” and he pushed her back into the basket and closed the heavy lid again.






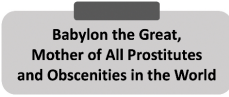


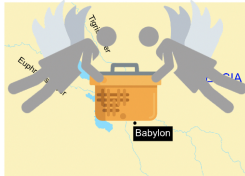

<sup>9</sup> Then I looked up and saw two women flying toward us, gliding on the wind. They had wings like a stork, and they picked up the basket and flew into the sky.

<sup>10</sup> “Where are they taking the basket?” I asked the angel.

<sup>11</sup> He replied, “To the land of Babylonia, where they will build a temple for the basket. And when the temple is ready, they will set the basket there on its pedestal.”

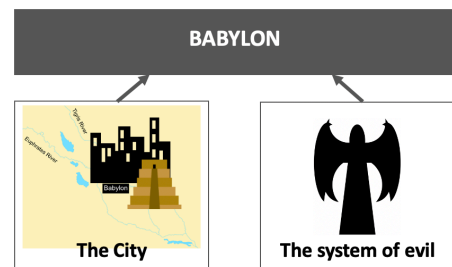


The similarities between this woman that Zechariah saw and the woman “Babylon” in Revelation are very striking!

Zechariah 5:5–11	Revelation 17–18
<p>Woman <b>sitting in</b> a basket (5:7).</p> 	<p>Woman <b>sitting on</b> the beast, seven mountains and many waters (17:3, 9, 15).</p> 
<p>Emphasis on <b>commerce</b> (a basket for measuring grain in 5:6).</p> 	<p>Emphasis on <b>commerce</b> (merchant of grain in 18:13).</p> 
<p>Woman’s <b>name</b> is Wickedness (5:8).</p> 	<p>Woman’s <b>name</b> is “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World” (17:5).</p> 
<p>Focus on <b>false worship</b> (a temple is built for the woman in 5:11).</p> 	<p>Focus on <b>false worship</b> (18:2–3).</p> 
<p>Woman is <b>taken to Babylon</b> (5:10–11).</p> 	<p>Woman is <b>called Babylon</b> (17:5).</p> 

It appears that God will one day allow the real city of Babylon to be rebuilt and revived before the Tribulation. It will probably be in modern-day Iraq, the historical location of Babylon. And it will be the headquarters of the Antichrist. It will once again represent the Kingdom of Man.

Babylon will both be the city and the system of evil that it is known for. And following what it had always done in history, Babylon will rise up to defy Yahweh.





## 2. The Scarlet Beast

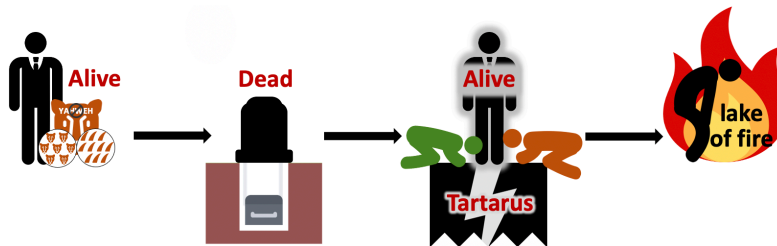
The details of the scarlet beast (Revelation 17:8) tell us that this is the Antichrist. He is the first beast, the one that rises out of the sea that we learnt about in Revelation 13.



### Revelation 17:8

The beast you saw was once alive but isn't now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit and go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world, whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made, will be amazed at the reappearance of this beast who had died.

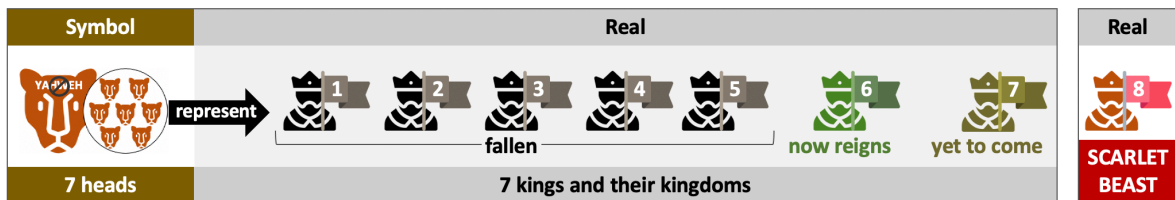
The beast will die and go to the abyss. Then he will come back to earth and cause the entire world to worship him.



## But what does it mean that this beast has seven heads?

### Revelation 17:9–11

<sup>9</sup> “This calls for a mind with understanding: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills where the woman rules. They also represent seven kings. <sup>10</sup> Five kings have already fallen, the sixth now reigns, and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be brief. <sup>11</sup> “The scarlet beast that was, but is no longer, is the eighth king. He is like the other seven, and he, too, is headed for destruction.



The **seven heads** are seven kings and their kingdoms. (In the Bible, kings also represent their kingdoms.)

But which kings are all of these?

The first clue is that all seven are connected to the beast and his kingdom (they are his “heads”). In other words, they are all different generations of the Kingdom of Man.



The second clue is that “five of the kings have already fallen”. This tells us these are earlier versions of the Kingdom of Man that have already past.

Recall when Nebuchadnezzar had his dream of the metal statue, he saw five kingdoms, starting with his own. They were:

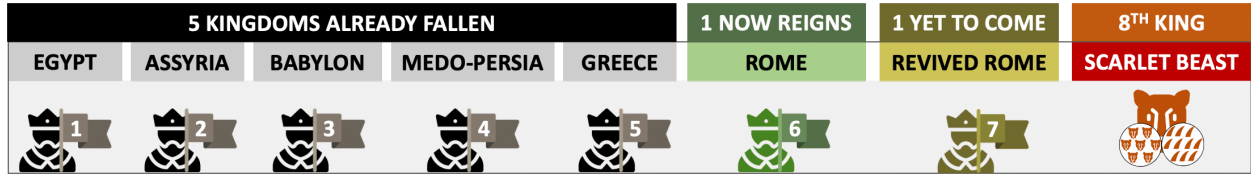
- Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom)
- Medo-Persia
- Greece
- Roman Empire
- Revived Roman Empire (this is future to us).



But who are the other two heads?

Before Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon, there were two earlier superpowers: Egypt and Assyria! They were each a version of the Kingdom of Man.

So putting them together we have the seven kingdoms.



Kingdom of Man	Notes	
1. Egypt	Earlier kingdom. Already fallen.	
2. Assyria	Earlier kingdom. Already fallen.	
3. Babylon	Already fallen.	
4. Medo-Persia	Already fallen.	
5. Greece	Already fallen.	
6. Roman Empire	From the apostle John’s viewpoint, the first five are already gone (“five kings have already fallen”). The Roman Empire that he lived in is the sixth kingdom that “now reigns”.	
7. Revived Roman Empire	This Kingdom of Man is “yet to come”. It is future to John and also to us.	
8. The Scarlet Beast	The beast itself is the eighth kingdom. The fact that its “heads” were the previous seven tells us this final kingdom is connected to all the others. It is the eighth and final version of the Kingdom of Man. The Antichrist will be its ruler. This kingdom is future to John and to us.	

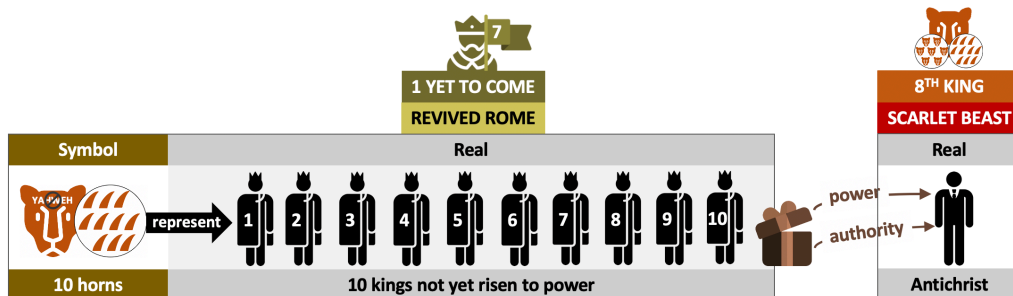


**But why does the scarlet beast also have 10 horns?**

**Revelation 17:12–13**

<sup>12</sup> The ten horns of the beast are ten kings who have not yet risen to power. They will be appointed to their kingdoms for one brief moment to reign with the beast. <sup>13</sup> They will all agree to give him their power and authority.

The ten horns are the ten kings who will later rule the revived Roman Empire (Kingdom #7) together as an alliance or coalition.



They only rule for a short time because their purpose is to agree to hand over control of the world to a single ruler: the eighth king, the scarlet beast (the Antichrist). The Antichrist and his kingdom (Kingdom #8) will become the supreme ruler.



### 3. The Antichrist versus Babylon

Now that we have identified the woman (Babylon) and the scarlet beast (the Antichrist), we will look at what John was told about the relationship between them.

#### Revelation 17:1–3a, 6, 15

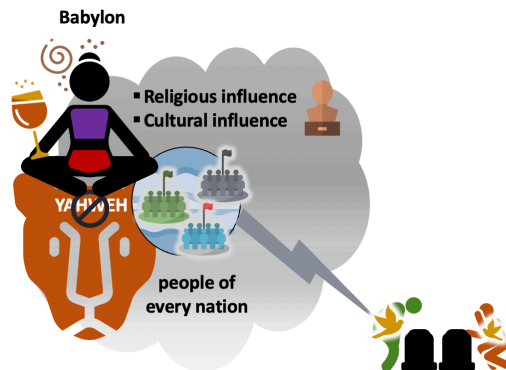
<sup>1</sup> One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. “Come with me,” he said, “and I will show you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who rules over many waters.

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the world have committed adultery with her, and the people who belong to this world have been made drunk by the wine of her immorality.”

<sup>3</sup> So the angel took me in the Spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast...

<sup>6</sup> I could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God’s holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.

<sup>15</sup> Then the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language.

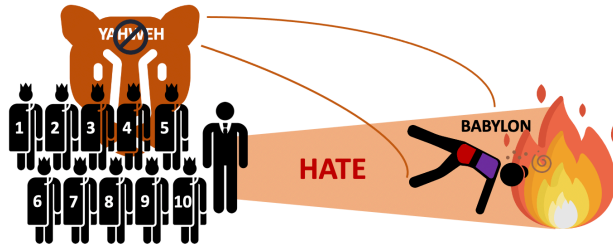


Babylon, the prostitute, has great religious and cultural influence over the world (“who rules over many waters”). The religion of Babylon is some kind of man-centred paganism or idolatry. She has made the rulers and peoples of the world completely sinful.

And she is busy attacking tribulation believers and killing them (“drunk with the blood of God’s holy people”).

Babylon is seen riding the beast, suggesting that she strongly controls or influences the Antichrist.

But the Antichrist and the ten kings hate her. So they will throw her off and burn her up with fire. In other words, the Antichrist overthrows the influence of Babylon.



**Revelation 17:16–17**

<sup>16</sup> The scarlet beast and his ten horns all hate the prostitute. They will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire. <sup>17</sup> For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out his purposes. They will agree to give their authority to the scarlet beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled.

God Himself is allowing this to happen.

In fact, God uses the Antichrist and the ten kings to play a role in destroying Babylon permanently.

**But how is Babylon destroyed?**

It is destroyed in two stages.

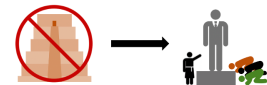


**“Religious” Babylon destroyed**

First, the Antichrist will replace the false religion of Babylon with something even worse—the worship of himself as god! The people of the world will worship him instead! They will no longer follow the religious system of Babylon.

**Revelation 13:4**

They worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they also worshiped the beast. “Who is as great as the beast?” they exclaimed. “Who is able to fight against him?”



## “Commercial” Babylon destroyed

Then, John sees God destroy the global economic power of Babylon.



### Revelation 18:1–3

<sup>1</sup> After all this I saw another angel come down from heaven with great authority, and the earth grew bright with his splendor. <sup>2</sup> He gave a mighty shout:

“Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen!

She has become a home for demons.  
She is a hideout for every foul spirit,  
a hideout for every foul vulture  
and every foul and dreadful animal.

<sup>3</sup> For all the nations have fallen

because of the wine of her passionate immorality.  
The kings of the world  
have committed adultery with her.

Because of her desires for extravagant luxury,  
the merchants of the world have grown rich.”

The nations have become rich because Babylon has been buying the goods of the world. It will be the great economic centre of the planet.

Then Yahweh steps in suddenly and warns believers to flee and escape the city because He will violently destroy not just Babylon’s economy, but Babylon itself, all in a single day!

### Revelation 18:4–8

<sup>4</sup> Then I heard another voice calling from heaven,

“Come away from her, my people.

Do not take part in her sins,  
or you will be punished with her.

<sup>5</sup> For her sins are piled as high as heaven,  
and God remembers her evil deeds.

<sup>6</sup> Do to her as she has done to others.

Double her penalty for all her evil deeds.  
She brewed a cup of terror for others,  
so brew twice as much for her.

<sup>7</sup> She glorified herself and lived in luxury,  
so match it now with torment and sorrow.

She boasted in her heart,  
‘I am queen on my throne.  
I am no helpless widow,  
and I have no reason to mourn.’

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, these plagues will overtake her in a single day—  
death and mourning and famine.

She will be completely consumed by fire,  
for the Lord God who judges her is mighty.”



The world reacts in horror and weeps over Babylon's destruction. God has destroyed the centre of the world's economy.



And the nations that depend on Babylon to get rich are ruined as well. Kings of the earth, merchants and shipmasters all grieve and mourn for Babylon.

Interestingly, even as the kings of the world mourn, they know it is God who has sent this judgment upon Babylon. They are not ignorant of how disgusted Yahweh is over evil.

## The kings mourn

### Revelation 18:9–10

<sup>9</sup> And the kings of the world who committed adultery with her and enjoyed her great luxury will mourn for her as they see the smoke rising from her charred remains.

<sup>10</sup> They will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will cry out,

“How terrible, how terrible for you,  
O Babylon, you great city!  
In a single moment  
God's judgment came on you.”

## The merchants mourn

The merchants of the world mourn as well, but they don't mourn just for Babylon. They mourn for themselves because there is no one left to buy their goods.

### Revelation 18:11–17a

<sup>11</sup> The merchants of the world will weep and mourn for her, for there is no one left to buy their goods. <sup>12</sup> She bought great quantities of gold, silver, jewels, and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet cloth; things made of fragrant thyine wood, ivory goods, and objects made of expensive wood; and bronze, iron, and marble. <sup>13</sup> She also bought cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, wagons, and bodies—that is, human slaves.

<sup>14</sup> “The fancy things you loved so much  
are gone,” they cry.

“All your luxuries and splendor  
are gone forever,  
never to be yours again.”

<sup>15</sup> The merchants who became wealthy by selling her these things will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will weep and cry out,

<sup>16</sup> “How terrible, how terrible for that great city!  
She was clothed in finest purple and scarlet linens,  
decked out with gold and precious stones and pearls!

<sup>17</sup> In a single moment  
all the wealth of the city is gone!”

## The shipmasters mourn

The shipmasters also cry out in horror and mourn at their loss of business as they see Babylon destroyed.

### Revelation 18:17b–19

<sup>17</sup> And all the captains of the merchant ships and their passengers and sailors and crews will stand at a distance. <sup>18</sup> They will cry out as they watch the smoke ascend, and they will say, “Where is there another city as great as this?” <sup>19</sup> And they will weep and throw dust on their heads to show their grief. And they will cry out,



“How terrible, how terrible for that great city!


The shipowners became wealthy  
by transporting her great wealth on the seas.


In a single moment it is all gone.”

Interestingly, John sees two very different reactions to the destruction of Babylon on earth and in heaven.

While people on earth mourn the destruction of Babylon, the multitudes in heaven, the 24 elders and the four living beings are worshipping God because of it!

 **Two Reactions to the Destruction of Babylon** 

	Earth	Heaven
	Woe	Worship
	Grief	Glory
	Mourning	Delight



### Revelation 18:20–19:5

<sup>20</sup> Rejoice over her fate, O heaven  
and people of God and apostles and prophets!  
For at last God has judged her  
for your sakes.

<sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a huge millstone. He threw it into the ocean and shouted,

“Just like this, the great city Babylon  
will be thrown down with violence  
and will never be found again.

<sup>22</sup> The sound of harps, singers, flutes, and trumpets  
will never be heard in you again.



No craftsmen and no trades  
 will ever be found in you again.  
 The sound of the mill  
 will never be heard in you again.  
<sup>23</sup> The light of a lamp  
 will never shine in you again.  
 The happy voices of brides and grooms  
 will never be heard in you again.  
 For your merchants were the greatest in the world,  
 and you deceived the nations with your sorceries.  
<sup>24</sup> In your streets flowed the blood of the prophets and of God's holy people  
 and the blood of people slaughtered all over the world."

<sup>1</sup> After this, I heard what sounded like a vast crowd in heaven shouting,  
"Praise the LORD!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

<sup>2</sup> His judgments are true and just.

He has punished the great prostitute

who corrupted the earth with her immorality.

He has avenged the murder of his servants."



<sup>3</sup> And again their voices rang out:

"Praise the LORD!

The smoke from that city ascends forever and ever!"

<sup>4</sup> Then the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down and worshiped God, who was sitting on the throne. They cried out, "Amen! Praise the LORD!"

<sup>5</sup> And from the throne came a voice that said,

"Praise our God,

all his servants,

all who fear him,

from the least to the greatest."

The phrase "Praise the LORD!" or "Praise Yahweh!" (Revelation 19:1, 3, 4) is from one Greek word, which is based on the Hebrew word "halleluyah".

This is the very first time "hallelujah" is used in the New Testament and it is used to praise God's righteous judgment on evil Babylon. God is being praised for judging evil and avenging the murder of believers!

## HALLELUJAH!

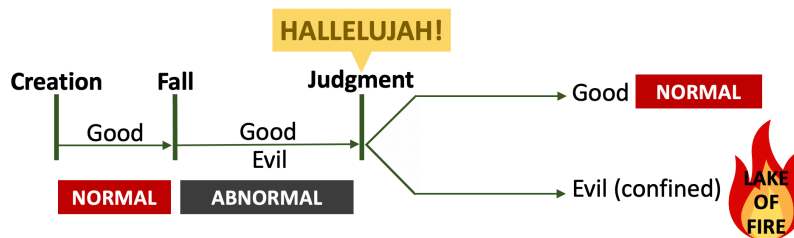
- Praise God for judging evil!
- Praise God for avenging the murders of His believers!

Interestingly, the first time “hallelujah” is used in the Old Testament is in Psalm 104. There, it is also used to praise God for His righteous judgment on evil.

### Psalm 104:35

Let all sinners vanish from the face of the earth;  
 let the wicked disappear forever.  
 Let all that I am praise the LORD.  
 Praise the LORD!

Indeed, when Yahweh judges evil and wickedness and saves those who trust Him, it is something worthy of praise.



(Note how the multitudes in heaven are aware of what is happening on earth. This gives us a hint that the people in heaven may have some limited knowledge of what is happening on the ground. Perhaps with certain major events, like Babylon’s final destruction, God lets the people in heaven know.)

Actually, Revelation isn’t the first time in the Bible God talks about the destruction of Babylon.

### i. Isaiah

In Isaiah 13:1–13, God shows him a vision of the destruction of Babylon.

#### Isaiah 13:1, 9–11

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah son of Amoz received this message concerning the destruction of Babylon:

<sup>9</sup> For see, the day of the LORD is coming—  
 the terrible day of his fury and fierce anger.

The land will be made desolate,  
 and all the sinners destroyed with it.

<sup>10</sup> The heavens will be black above them;  
 the stars will give no light.

The sun will be dark when it rises,  
 and the moon will provide no light.

<sup>11</sup> “I, the LORD, will punish the world for its evil  
 and the wicked for their sin.

I will crush the arrogance of the proud  
 and humble the pride of the mighty.

What Isaiah described has not yet been fulfilled in history.

## ii. Jeremiah

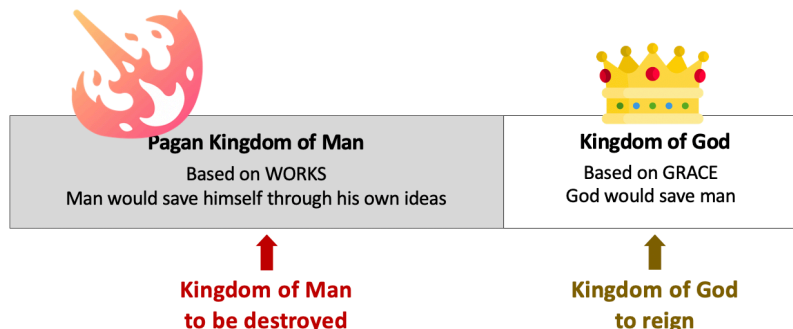
Also, Jeremiah prophesied about the utter destruction of Babylon. Interestingly, many of his details match the details Jesus gives to John in Revelation.

### The Fate of Babylon in Jeremiah and Revelation

Details about Babylon	From Jeremiah	From Revelation
It is compared to a golden cup.	51:7a	17:3–4; 18:6
It sits or dwells by many waters.	51:13a	17:1
It is involved with the nations.	51:7b	17:2
It is called by the same name, Babylon.	50:1	18:10
It will be destroyed suddenly.	51:8a	18:8
It will be destroyed by fire.	51:30b	17:16
It will never again be lived in.	50:39	18:21
It will be punished according to its deeds.	50:29	18:6
Its fall is pictured as a stone thrown into water.	51:63–64	18:21
God’s people are told to flee from it.	51:6, 45	18:4
Heaven rejoices at its destruction.	51:48	19:1–2
It will not be found any longer.	51:63–64	18:21

God had put warnings even in the Old Testament of what would become of the evil and rebellious Kingdom of Man.

What John is shown is not new information. He is just given more details. This is God’s plan for the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God.



After Jesus gives John information about the fall of Babylon, Jesus tells him what will happen right before His second coming. So, this part is a “looking ahead”.



## In Heaven: Prelude to Jesus' Second Coming

This is what John describes.

### Revelation 19:6–10

<sup>6</sup> Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder:

“Praise the Lord!

For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

<sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice,  
and let us give honor to him.

For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb,  
and his bride has prepared herself.

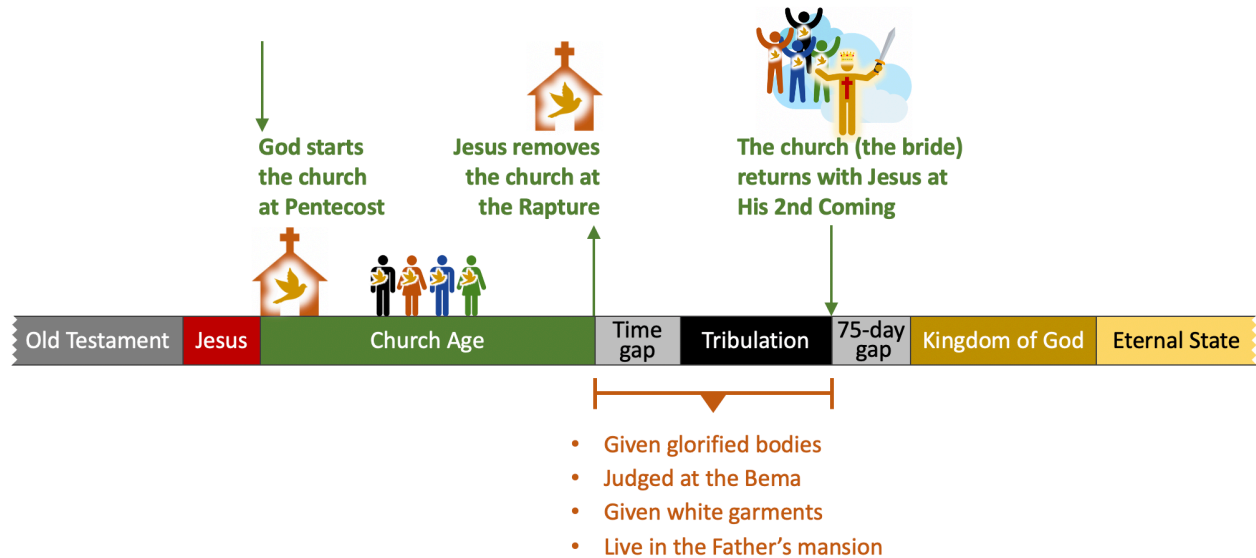
<sup>8</sup> She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.”  
For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.

<sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And he added, “These are true words that come from God.”

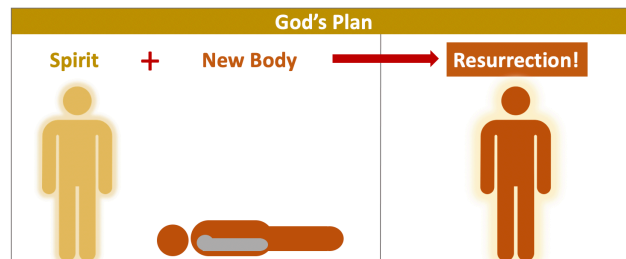
<sup>10</sup> Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters who testify about their faith in Jesus. Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.

Who is the bride that is to be married to the Lamb? It is the church!

Before the start of the Tribulation, Jesus takes the church up to safety in heaven with Him.

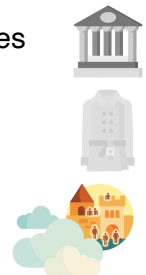


At the rapture, Jesus gives all church-age believers, dead and alive, new resurrection bodies. (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:51–52).



Then while in heaven, church-age believers:

- are judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) to evaluate their lives as disciples and rewarded (Romans 14:10, 12; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
- are given white garments to prepare for the wedding (Revelation 19:7b–8).
- will live in the rooms that Jesus has prepared for believers (John 14:1–3).



### Wedding clothes

Now John sees church-age believers dressed in wedding clothes that we make for ourselves. How do we make them? It is by the way we live now while on earth: “The fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.”

In other words, it appears that our good deeds affect the quality of our wedding clothes! This reminds us again of the importance of a good review at the Bema!

## Wedding guests

The angel who is speaking to John tells him that those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb are blessed (Revelation 19:9). But who are these invited guests?

It appears that they will be:

- all the Old Testament believers (Jews and Gentiles) as well as
- the tribulation believers (both Jews and Gentiles).

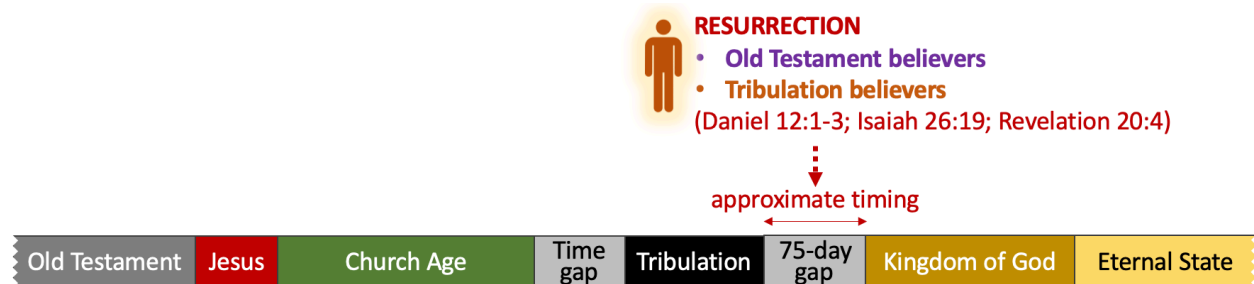


Jesus seems to have referred to this event when He was speaking to the Gentile Roman centurion whose servant He healed.

### Matthew 8:11

And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven.

(Note: Matthew uses both phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” interchangeably.)



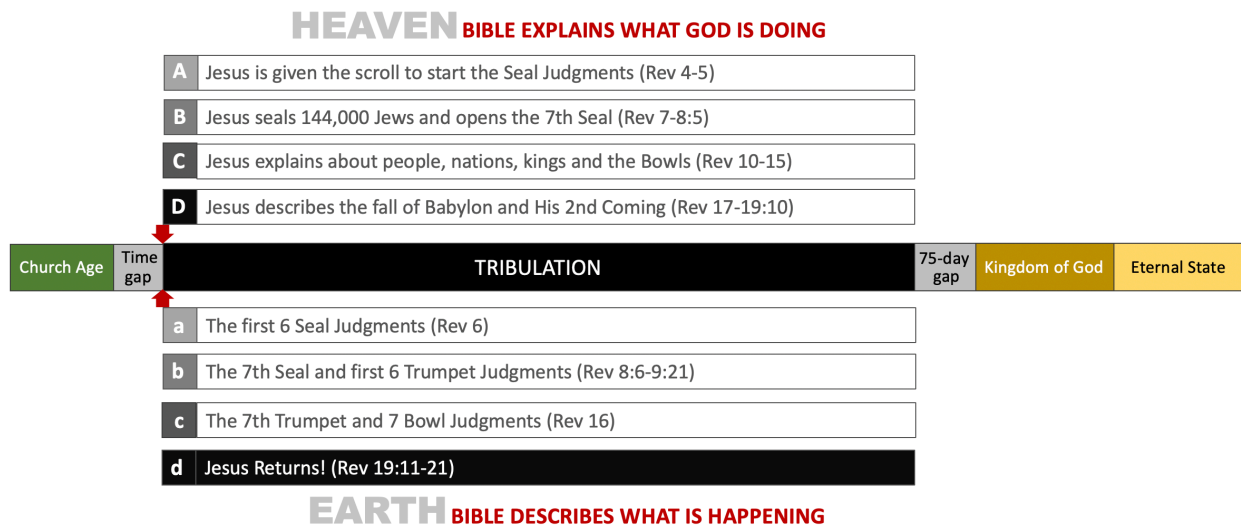


## Place of the wedding

The Bible doesn't really say if the feast starts in heaven and continues on earth or if it is entirely on earth. However, we believe it will certainly be celebrated on earth during the Kingdom of God, so the guests can be physically present in their resurrection bodies. (Of course, tribulation believers who survive won't need to be resurrected. They will simply walk into the Kingdom.)

After John sees all of this, finally, Jesus shows him what happens on earth at His eagerly awaited second coming!

## d. Jesus Returns!

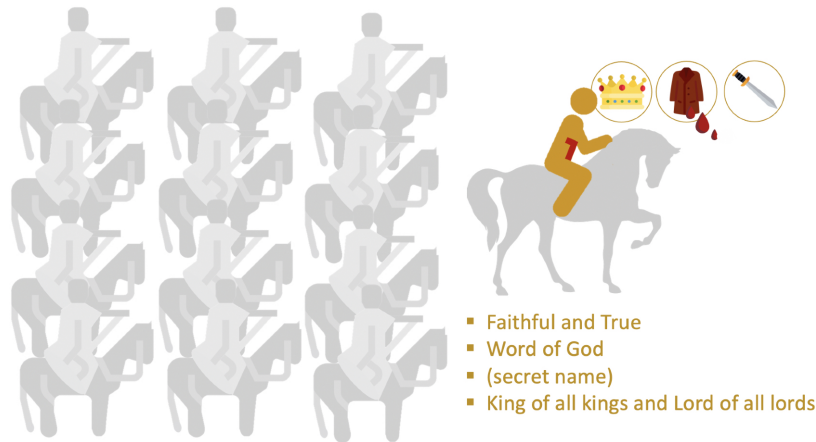


### Revelation 19:11–16

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its  rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were  many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. <sup>13</sup> He wore  a robe dipped in blood, and his  title was the Word of God.

<sup>14</sup> The  armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of  pure white linen, followed him on white horses.

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth came a sharp sword to  strike down the nations. He will  rule them with an iron rod. He will release the  fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a  winepress. <sup>16</sup> On his robe at his thigh was written this  title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.



Jesus' title is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (NIV). He is coming to be the global ruler of the entire planet. He will rule over all nations and peoples.

Interestingly, Jesus isn't the first king of kings!

During the time of the exile, Yahweh had handed over political power of the world to the Gentile Kingdom of Man. Yahweh made pagan kings become world rulers. The first one was Nebuchadnezzar. God gave the Babylonian king the dream of the metal statue and when Daniel gave the interpretation, this is how he addressed Nebuchadnezzar:

**Daniel 2:36–38 (NIV)**

<sup>36</sup> "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. <sup>37</sup> Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; <sup>38</sup> in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.



We see that "king of kings" is a literal, political title given to the world ruler that God appointed.

Ezekiel also mentioned Nebuchadnezzar as "king of kings" (Ezekiel 26:7) and in the book of Ezra, Artaxerxes, the king of Persia (this was some time after Nebuchadnezzar), also calls himself the "king of kings" because he was the world ruler at the time (Ezra 7:12).

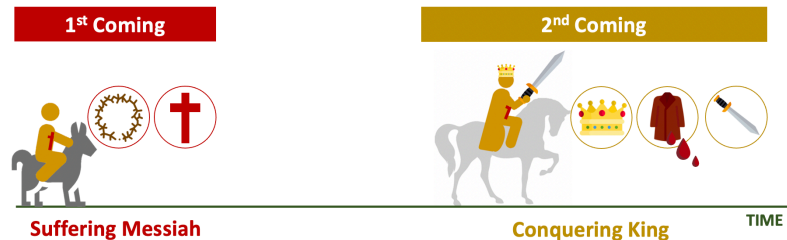
Each of the five kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's vision are real historical attempts to fulfil the Tower of Babel's Kingdom of Man fantasy, where fallen, corruptible mankind can subdue the earth by their own works, independently of God. And just as it was at Babel, where they wanted to make their name famous (Genesis 11:4), each king of these kingdoms tried to do the same.

But now, Jesus arrives as the rightful and true King of kings. He comes to claim His Kingdom and to begin His physical, global rule of planet earth.

## 1. The Bride returns to the earth with Jesus

At Jesus' first coming, He rode a donkey and wore a crown of thorns. He came as the suffering Messiah.

At His second coming, He will ride a white horse and have many crowns of authority on His head. He comes as the conquering King!



Jesus returns visibly and dramatically in triumph and victory! Everyone on earth will see Him with their own eyes! This is what Jesus Himself said.

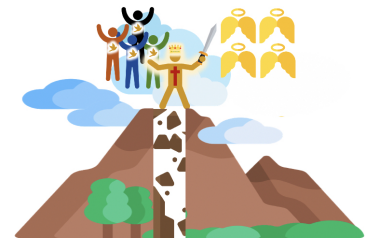
### Matthew 24:27–30

<sup>27</sup> For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. <sup>28</sup> Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near.

<sup>29</sup> “Immediately after the anguish of those days,  
the sun will be darkened,  
the moon will give no light,  
the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>30</sup> And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Jesus will physically land on the Mount of Olives. His second coming will be so dramatic that the mountain will split apart and the entire cosmos will change! There is no mistaking Jesus' second coming. The whole world will know.



### Zechariah 14:4, 5b–7

<sup>4</sup> On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south. <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones with him.

<sup>6</sup> On that day the sources of light will no longer shine, <sup>7</sup> yet there will be continuous day! Only the LORD knows how this could happen. There will be no normal day and night, for at evening time it will still be light.

Jesus will not be alone when He returns. He will come with His angels and the resurrected church! This is what Jesus and Paul said respectively.

**Matthew 25:31**

“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne.

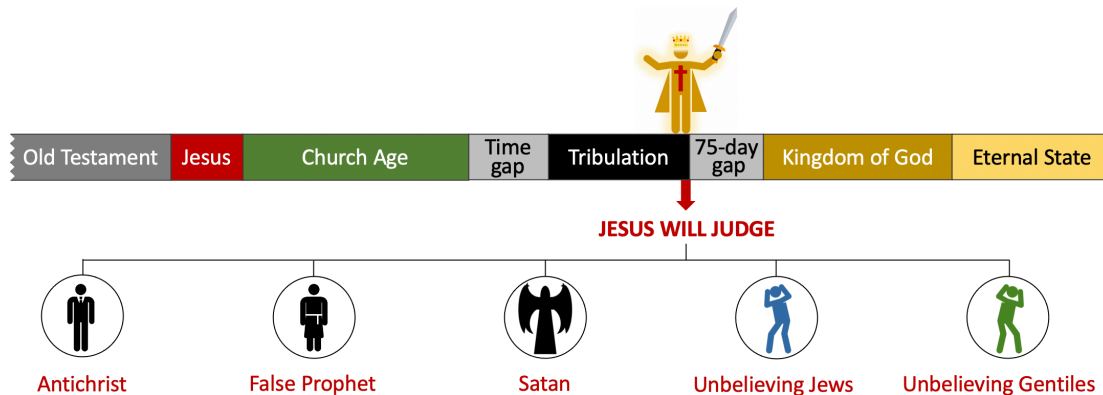
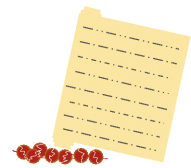
**1 Thessalonians 3:13**

May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen.

## 2. Jesus becomes King through Judgment

Jesus has finally completely opened the inheritance scroll in heaven. And now, He has come to claim the earth as His inheritance and restart the Kingdom of God.

But how does Jesus become King? Through judgment. He will judge and destroy evil.



### Satan, the Antichrist, false prophet and evil mankind battle Jesus

The Antichrist who is the eighth king and final version of the Kingdom of Man will gather armies of evil humans to battle against Jesus at Armageddon. But Jesus will win.

**Revelation 17:14**

Together they will go to war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord of all lords and King of all kings. And his called and chosen and faithful ones will be with him.”

These are the details that John sees.

**Revelation 19:17–21, 20:1–3a**

<sup>17</sup> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: “Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. <sup>18</sup> Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great.”



<sup>19</sup> Then I saw the beast and the kings of the world and their armies gathered together to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army.



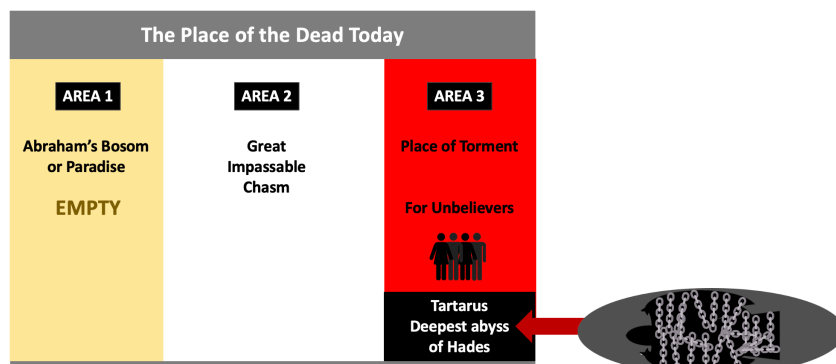
<sup>20</sup> And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.



<sup>21</sup> Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse. And the vultures all gorged themselves on the dead bodies.



<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a heavy chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon—that old serpent, who is the devil, Satan—and bound him in chains for a thousand years. <sup>3</sup> The angel threw him into the bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished.

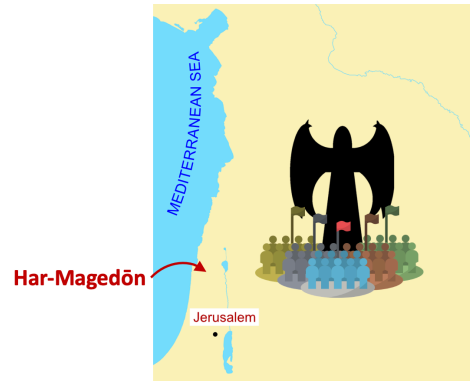


The final battle of the Tribulation is at the flat-topped hill called Har-Magedōn (or Har-Megiddo) in Israel. In English, it is known as Armageddon.

Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet, the “unholy trinity” organise this battle.

### Revelation 16:16

And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name Armageddon.



## Jesus wins the battle just by speaking

It appears that Jesus defeats them just by speaking! John sees that the entire army is killed by the “sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse”. Paul had earlier written about this.

### 2 Thessalonians 2:8

Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.



This is definitely not the first time we have seen God’s power through mere words.

- In the past, Yahweh spoke and created the universe (Genesis 1:3).
- Then we saw Jesus speak a word to calm a storm (Matthew 8:23–27).
- Jesus also spoke a word and withered a fig tree (Matthew 21:18–19).
- God’s Word is described as a sword (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12).

Now, this same Jesus speaks a word and kills untold numbers of rebellious mankind. This will be a battle like no other. It will be over in an instant!

Though we, His army, ride behind Him, we don’t have to strike a single enemy.

Jesus—Yahweh Himself—wins the victory singlehandedly. Jesus treads the winepress alone (Revelation 14:14–20). The blood of His enemies will stain His clothes (Isaiah 63:1–6).



## Jesus throws the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire

Jesus permanently destroys the eighth king and the entire Kingdom of Man by throwing the Antichrist alive into the lake of fire. He does the same with the false prophet.

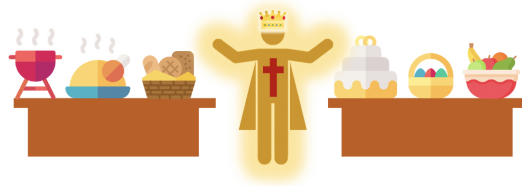
## Jesus throws Satan into the abyss

However, Jesus will throw Satan into the abyss, or the bottomless pit, for 1,000 years. Jesus doesn't throw him into the lake of fire yet. Why? We will see what happens to Satan in the next lesson.

## Birds are invited to the great banquet of God

There are actually two feasts mentioned in Revelation:

- The first is the wedding feast of the Lamb.



- The second is a gruesome one. An angel calls for the birds to get ready to feast on the great number of soldiers who will die at the battle of Armageddon.



## 3. King Jesus regathers the Jewish survivors from all over the world to judge them.

### i. He will remove the unbelieving Jews.

#### Ezekiel 20:34–38 (NIV)

<sup>34</sup> I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered—with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. <sup>35</sup> I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you. <sup>36</sup> As I judged your ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>37</sup> I will take note of you as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.

<sup>38</sup> I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.



**ii. Jesus will save the believing Jews and usher them into the Kingdom of God.**

**Ezekiel 36:24–28**

<sup>24</sup> For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.

<sup>25</sup> “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

<sup>28</sup> “And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God.



**God’s New Covenant promises for the nation of Israel**

<p>God will forgive their sins.</p>	<p>God will put His law into their hearts.</p>	<p>God will regather Israel to the Promised Land forever.</p>
-------------------------------------	--	---

This remnant of believing Jews will form the complete nation of believing Israel!

Ezekiel 37:1–28 gives more details of this amazing time.



This is exactly what Paul referred to when he wrote to church-age Gentile believers (and quoted from Isaiah 59:20–21, 27:9):

**Romans 11:25–27**

<sup>25</sup> I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say,

“The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness.

<sup>27</sup> And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins.”

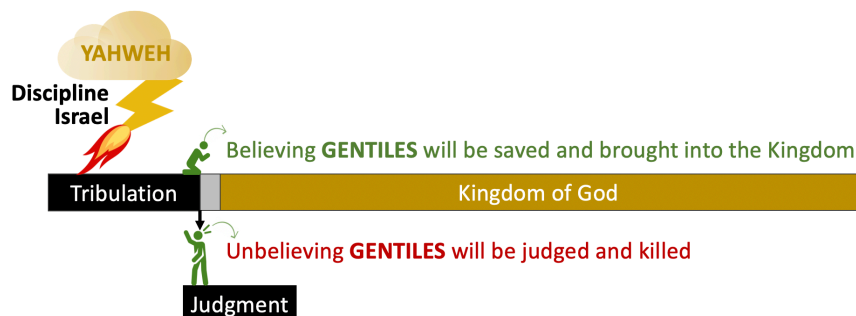
Finally, the time has come that God will fulfil the Jews’ long-awaited New Covenant promises!



**4. King Jesus judges the Gentile nations**

Jesus will also turn His attention to the Gentiles who survive the Tribulation and He will judge them.

- He will remove the unbelieving Gentiles.
- He will save those who believe in Him and bring them into His Kingdom.



Jesus says that the Gentile believers living during the Tribulation will show their inward belief through their outward actions of caring for His “brothers and sisters”, meaning the Jews. He will usher believing Gentiles into His Kingdom.

On the other hand, the unbelieving Gentiles in the Tribulation will treat the Jews poorly. They will not be invited into His Kingdom.

### Matthew 25:31–46

<sup>31</sup> “But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.



<sup>33</sup> He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

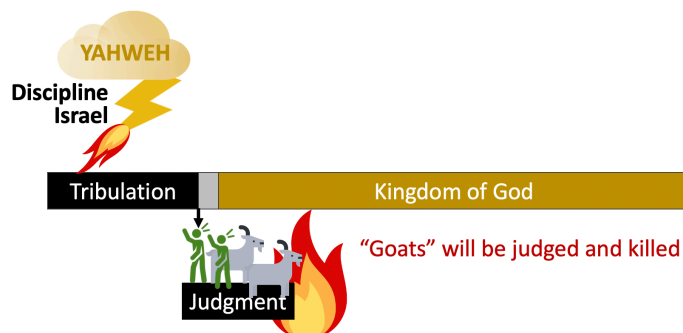
<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. <sup>36</sup> I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’



<sup>37</sup> “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? <sup>39</sup> When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

<sup>41</sup> “Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

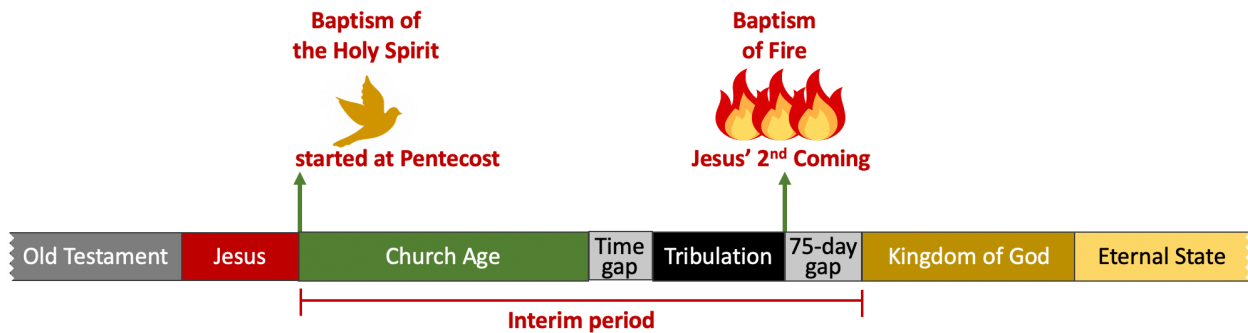


<sup>44</sup> “Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

<sup>46</sup> “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

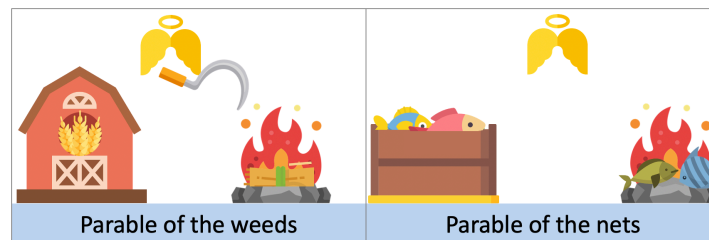
As we had learnt in the Matthew 13 parables (Lesson 40), the end of the interim age is when Jesus returns with His angels to sort out who are believers and unbelievers on the earth. This act of judgment/salvation is also known as the baptism of fire (Matthew 3:11–12).



Other parables that Jesus told regarding this end of the age are the parable of the net (Matthew 13:47–50) and the parable of the weeds (Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43).

### Matthew 13:40–41

<sup>40</sup> “Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

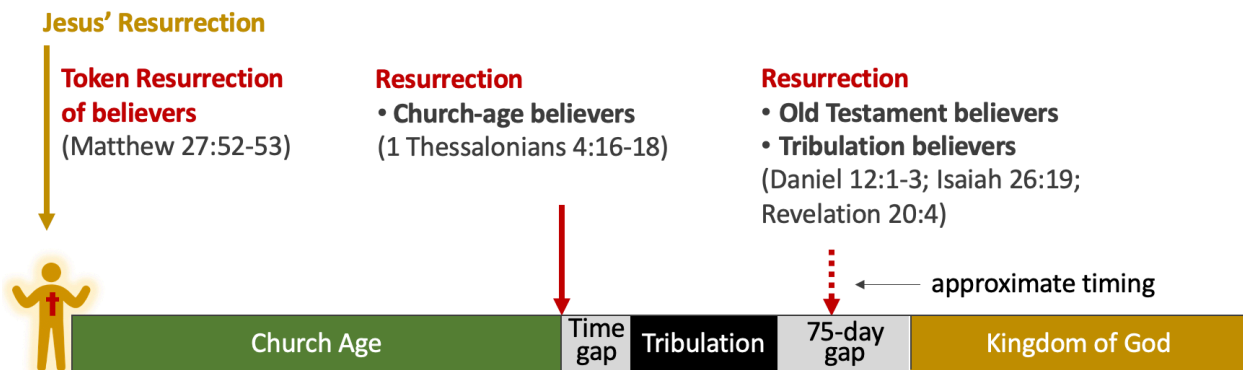


## 5. Dead Tribulation Believers and Old Testament Believers are Resurrected

At the start of the Kingdom, tribulation believers who have died will be resurrected at this time.

### Revelation 20:4

Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor accepted his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They all came to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.



Old Testament believers (like Noah, Abraham, David, etc.) will also be resurrected. The angel Gabriel told Daniel that after the Tribulation, many of “your people” will be raised to life.

### Daniel 12:1–2

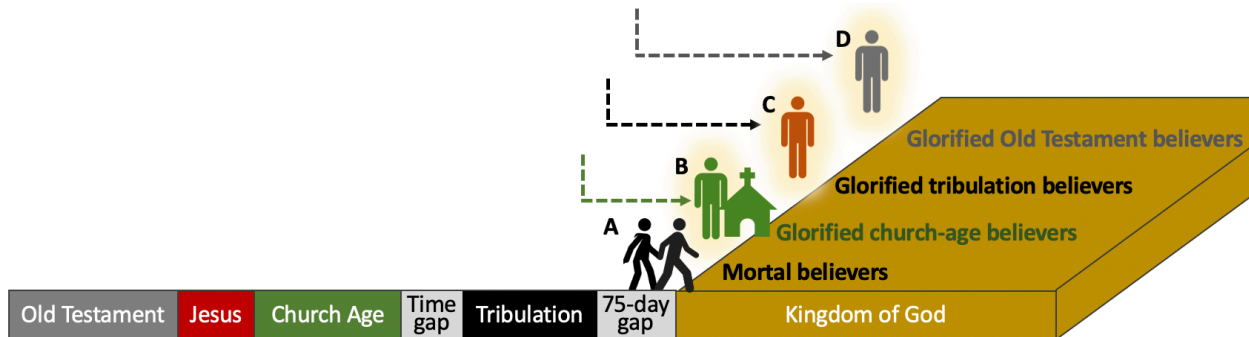
<sup>1</sup> “At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued.

<sup>2</sup> Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.

This means that both Old Testament believers and tribulation believers will be immortal when they enter the Kingdom of God.

## 6. A Mix of Mortals and Immortals in the Kingdom

After all the immediate events of Jesus' second coming, these are the groups of believers who will enter the Kingdom of God.



- A. There will be **mortal believers** (both Jews and Gentiles) who literally walk into the Kingdom.
- B. There will be **immortal, glorified, resurrected church-age believers** coming back down from heaven to be on earth again.
- C. There will also be **immortal, glorified, resurrected tribulation believers who had died**.
- D. There will also be **immortal, glorified, resurrected Old Testament believers who had died**.

Those who are mortal will continue to marry, have children and build families.

But those who are immortal (that is, with glorified resurrection bodies) will not marry anymore nor have children (Matthew 22:30).

This situation may sound very unusual but have we seen a situation where an immortal human walked among mortal people? Yes!

The resurrected Jesus spent 40 days with disciples who were very much still mortal!

In the next lesson, we will learn more about this long-awaited Kingdom of God.

## Are the fall feasts connected with Jesus' second coming?

At Sinai, we had seen how God had intentionally given Israel a prophetic calendar.



The Jewish months are based on the lunar calendar

Nisan	Iyyar	Sivan	Tammuz	Av	Elul	Tishrei	Heshvan	Kislev	Tevet	Shevat	Adar
-------	-------	-------	--------	----	------	---------	---------	--------	-------	--------	------

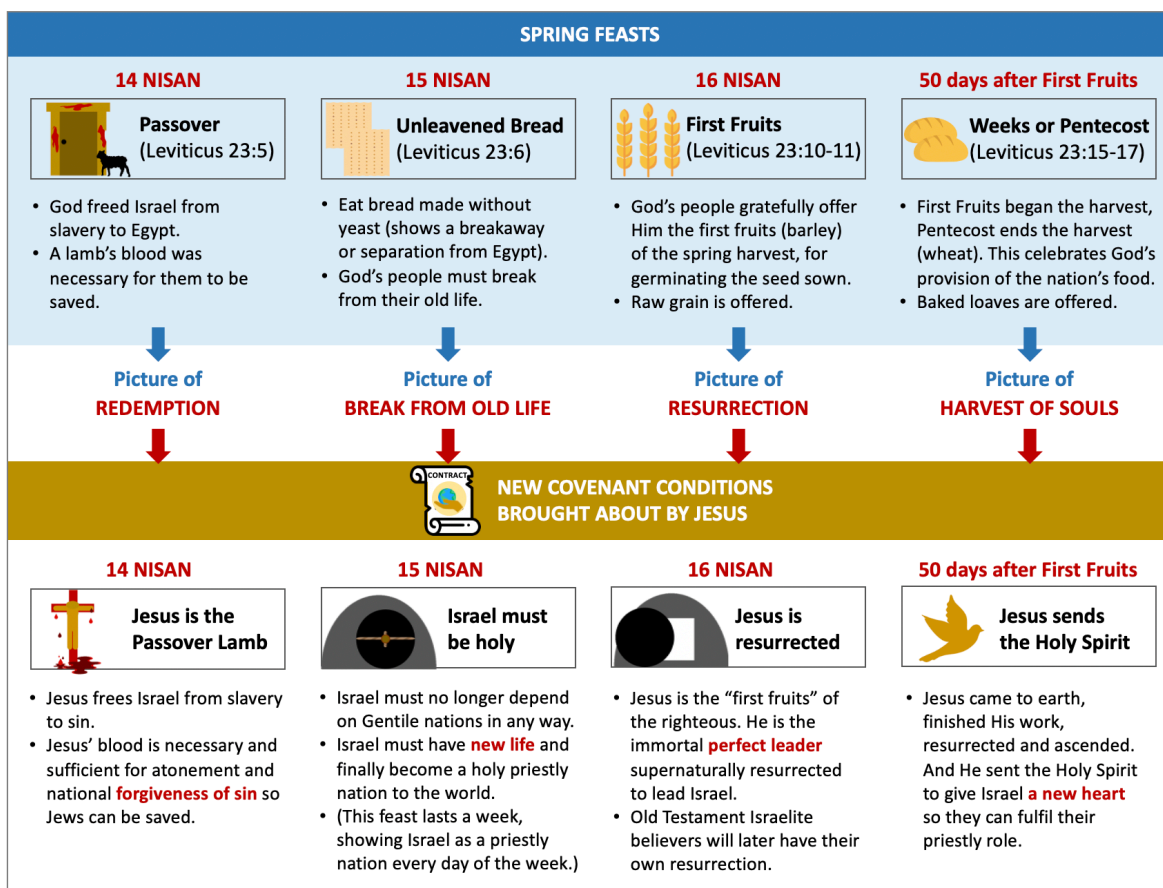


Compared with the Gregorian solar calendar

Mar-Apr	Apr-May	May-Jun	Jun-Jul	Jul-Aug	Aug-Sep	Sep-Oct	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec	Dec-Jan	Jan-Feb	Feb-Mar
---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Their annual feasts (or “appointed times”) were actually a picture of God’s plan for Israel.

At Jesus’ first coming, He fulfilled the four spring feasts right down to the exact timing.






However, the three fall feasts that happen in the month of Tishrei (coinciding with September-October in our Gregorian solar calendar) have not yet been fulfilled.

Based on how Jesus exactly fulfilled the spring feasts, we believe He will also fulfil the fall feasts down to their exact dates at His second coming.

But what will Jesus do on these festival dates?

We're not sure because the Bible does not say. However, understanding the details of the feasts and what they are for, here are some possible guesses.

FALL FEASTS		
<b>1 TISHREI</b>  <b>Trumpets</b> (Leviticus 23:24-25)	<b>10 TISHREI</b>  <b>Day of Atonement</b> (Leviticus 23:27-32)	<b>15 TISHREI</b>  <b>Tabernacles or Festival of Shelters</b> (Leviticus 23:34-43)
The trumpet blast at the end of harvest tells Israel it's time to reflect on their sins and repent before God.	The high priest sacrifices a goat and sprinkles its blood in the Holy of Holies as an atonement for the sins of Israel (Leviticus 16:15-22).	Jews celebrate God's deliverance of them from Egypt (a kingdom of man) as well as His continued provision during their 40 years in the desert.
<b>When will Jesus fulfill them? The Bible does not say. But here are some possibilities.</b>		
<b>End of the Tribulation</b> This could possibly be the moment when Israel is regathered like a harvest before Jesus for their final chance to repent (Matthew 24:31).	<b>End of the Tribulation</b> This is possibly when all of believing Israel will come to faith in their Messiah. The Jews will accept Jesus as their substitute sacrifice who atones for their sins (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25-27).	<b>Start of the Kingdom of God</b> This will perhaps be when Jesus lives or "tabernacles" among His chosen nation. Jesus has finally delivered them permanently from the evil Kingdom of Man.

God's plan for Israel is not yet complete. Just as our promise-making, promise-keeping God will fulfil all His covenants with Israel, we believe He will fully fulfil this Jewish prophetic calendar as well.

## Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. Have you ever despaired and wondered what God is doing about all the evil in the world? Revelation reveals how He will end this evil age. How does this information help you in your daily life? How should it help you live? What should you realise about God?
2. Though we encounter so many ideas about how the world works, the Bible states there are just two ways of thinking, represented by two kingdoms: the Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom of God. How can we use this biblical worldview of two kingdoms to analyse the trends, cultures, philosophies and religions of the world? When encountering something “new”, how do we use the Bible’s framework to evaluate and take apart the “new idea”?
3. How does understanding Revelation help you study the rest of the Bible? Did you notice how many Old Testament prophecies are only finally fulfilled in Revelation? Does this knowledge cause you to re-evaluate how you’ve treated other parts of Scripture? How careful do you think the Holy Spirit was when He crafted the Bible’s text?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Revelation 20–22 (whole chapters)