

The Futurist Interpretation of Revelation: Intertextual Evidence from the Prologue

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Interpreting the book of Revelation is daunting to many people because of the various interpretations on offer. Evaluating these interpretations can be simplified by grouping them into broad interpretative approaches so that certain interpretations can be evaluated together rather than individually. For instance, the historicist approach, which sees Revelation as symbolically unfolding church history from the first century to the return of Christ, predominated throughout much of church history. Current interpreters of Revelation find the historicist approach misguided. Assuming that this is a correct judgment, the interpreter need not trouble himself over whether the second seal represents the triumph of Christ during his temptation in the wilderness,² the militarily-enforced *Pax Romana*,³ or conditions in the Roman empire until the time of Trajan.⁴

Current interpreters of Revelation are divided between preterists who understand Revelation to refer to events that happened in the first generation of Christians,⁵ idealists who take the book to be referring primarily to the unseen realities that Christians must reckon with in the time between Christ's comings,⁶ and futurists who understand the bulk of the book (Rv 4–22) to be focused on the events of Christ's Second Coming and the eternal state that follows.⁷ This paper argues that the

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² Oecumenius, "Commentary on the Apocalypse," in *Greek Commentaries on Revelation*, Ancient Christian Texts, ed. Thomas Oden, trans. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), 28–29.

³ George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 100; Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 110; Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation*, New Covenant Commentary (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 94.

⁴ Thomas Goodwin, "An Exposition of Revelation," in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861), 3:35–36; Jonathan Edwards, *Apocalyptic Writings*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 5:164.

⁵ This definition focuses on evangelical adherents to this view. See Peter J. Leithart, *Revelation*, ITC (New York: T&T Clark, 2018), 26–27.

⁶ Here following Beale's "modified" idealism. G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 48–49.

⁷ Interpreters now often claim that they take an "eclectic" approach that combines the best of the preterist, idealist, and futurist approaches. Beale, 48; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 21–22; Brian J. Tabb, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2019), 10–11; Buist M. Fanning, *Revelation*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 38–40. However, one approach invariably dominates the others (as is explicitly acknowledged by Beale and Osborne).

allusions to the OT in the prologue to Revelation (Rv 1:1–8) point readers to interpreting Revelation according to the futurist approach.⁸

“Things That Must Take Place” (Rv 1:1)

The words *the things that must soon take place* (ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει) (Rv 1:1) are an allusion to Daniel 2:28–29 and 45 in the Greek translation: The Lord “made known to King Nebuchadnezzar *things that must take place at the end of days* [ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν], and he who reveals mysteries showed to you things that are *necessary to take place* [ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι] (Dn 2:28–29, LES).⁹

Daniel 2 concerns Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of a statue made of various metals, representing a series of kingdoms (2:32–38). The first kingdom is Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian kingdom (2:38). The following kingdoms represented are Persia, Greece, and Rome.¹⁰ The stone that crushed the statue represented the Messiah and his kingdom (2:44).¹¹ The question at hand is whether Nebuchadnezzar’s

⁸ The claim is not that every allusion that follows *proves* futurism. Nor is the futurist orientation of each allusion equally strong. Taken together, however, these allusions are pointing in one direction. In addition, a futurist can affirm that events in the first century were typological precursors of the final day of the Lord and that the kinds of challenges and conflicts that mark the ultimate day of the Lord recur, in less extreme forms, throughout church history. Thus the futurist can apply the book in a way similar to preterists and idealists. The distinctive futurist claim is that Revelation is primarily about the ultimate Day of the Lord.

⁹ Ladd, 21; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1–7* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 53; J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997), 47; Beale, 137, 153; Osborne, 54; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation of John* (London: SPCK, 2005), 27; Boxall, 24; Leithart, 71; Fanning, 74–75.

¹⁰ This is the view found in the Talmud and “among medieval Jewish commentators.” Robert A. Anderson, *Signs and Wonders: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 22. It is also the dominant view among Christian interpreters. Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel and ‘Chronicon,’* ed. and trans. T. C. Schmidt. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2017) 78; Jerome, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason Archer Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 30; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. Thomas Myers (1852; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1:162; Edward J. Young, *Daniel* (1949; reprint, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1972), 74–75; Robert D. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (Chicago: Moody, 1954), 111–14; Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 68; Gleason L. Archer Jr., “Daniel,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 7:46–47; Stephen R. Miller *Daniel*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 199), 94–96; Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, CC (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2008), 147–51; James M. Hamilton Jr., *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015), 86. Critical scholars favor the sequence Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece. John J. Collins, *Daniel: With an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, FOTL (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 198), 52; idem., *Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 166. This sequence is not tenable. Collins concedes a critical weakness, namely that “Media never ruled over the Jews” (52). Steinmann levels four compelling arguments against the critical view (147–51). First, the messianic kingdom was not established while Greece ruled but while Rome ruled over Israel. Second, Media never conquered Babylon; a Persian empire that had already incorporated Media conquered Babylon. Third, Daniel 8 represents Media and Persia (symbolized by two horns) as part of a single empire (symbolized by the ram). Fourth, the four heads of the third beast in Daniel 7 (corresponding to the third part of the statue in chapter 2) correlates with the four horns on the goat representing Greece in chapter 8. Thus, the bronze part of the statue and the third beast represent Greece. To these arguments Tanner adds the observation that the book itself indicates that Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians (as a single entity) (Dn 5:28; 6:8). J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*, EEC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 198.

¹¹ Joe M. Sprinkle, *Daniel*, EBTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 400–402. Sprinkle gives the following lines of argument for seeing both the Messiah and his kingdom represented in the stone. (1) In both Daniel 2 and 7 the text shifts back and forth between king and kingdom referents. (2) Daniel 7’s equivalent to the stone is the Son of Man. (3) The stone imagery is developed in the NT as messianic (Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17–18; Rom 9:32–33; Acts 4:11; 1 Pt

vision culminated in the establishment of the kingdom of God at the first advent or whether it culminated in the coming of the kingdom of God in eschatological judgment.

Some interpreters think this allusion indicates that John's visions refer to events that began in John's own time.¹² Four reasons support this view. (1) The iron mixed with clay refers to the Roman Empire, possibly as it entered a period of decay.¹³ (2) The stone cut without hands refers to the virgin birth and the establishment of the messianic kingdom during the first advent, when Rome ruled the world.¹⁴ The stone becoming a mountain pictures the kingdom of Christ gradually growing during the inter-advent period.¹⁵ (3) John replaced Daniel's "at the end of days" with "soon," indicating that "[w]hat Daniel expected to occur in the far-off 'latter days' . . . John expects to begin in his own generation."¹⁶ (4) Revelation 1:6, 9, 13–15 speak of the kingdom as already present.

This view, however, suffers from several weaknesses. First, it is likely that the iron mixed with clay symbolizes a situation subsequent to the Roman Empire, which is symbolized by the legs of iron.¹⁷ Distinguishing between the legs of iron (Rome) and the ten toes of iron mixed with clay (future entities) goes back to Hippolytus, the earliest extant commentator on Daniel.¹⁸ The basic correctness of this ancient interpretation is confirmed by the parallel with the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7:24–27. These horns relate to the fourth beast (= the legs of iron = Rome) but represent a distinct eschatological stage of his activity (see below).¹⁹ Thus, the stone's impact on the statue must represent a period subsequent to the dissolution of Rome.

Second, the stone destroyed not only the feet but all the previous parts of the image as well. The utter destruction of the image symbolized the complete replacement of human kingdoms with the messianic kingdom (cf. Dn 2:35, 44).²⁰ This vision is about the kingdom of this world becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah (Rv 11:15). As Greidanus observes,

2:6–8). (4) That NT usage is rooted in the OT (Ps 118:22; Is 8:14–15; cf. Is 51:1). Perhaps it is also worth noting that eschatological Zion is pictured as a great mountain in Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:1. Paul R. House, *Daniel*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2018), 70.

¹² Beale, 137, 153; Leithart, 71; possibly implied in Thomas R. Schreiner, "Revelation," in *Hebrews—Revelation*, ESVEC (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 549–50.

¹³ Steinmann, 137.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 140–41.

¹⁵ Young, 79; Steinmann, 136.

¹⁶ Beale, 137, 153; cf. Leithart, 71. Note that Beale as an idealist sees the events of Revelation beginning in John's day and continuing through the inter-advent period, while Leithart, as a preterist, sees the events of Revelation as occurring in the first century when "the end of the imperial order of late antiquity" comes about.

¹⁷ Held even by Steinmann, who holds to a first-century appearance of the stone. Steinmann, 137.

¹⁸ *Daniel*, 78; cf. *idem*, "Treatise on Christ and Antichrist," in *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Novation*, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 186. Hippolytus specifies that the ten toes refer to "democracies . . . which are destined to come."

¹⁹ Young and Steinmann, for instance, reject the connection of the ten toes with the ten kings parallel to them in Daniel 7:24–27 on the grounds that Daniel 2:41 does not specify the toes to be ten in number. Young, 77–78; Steinmann, 137–38. Surely this is pedantic. Worse, it fails to allow acknowledged parallel passages to interpret one another. Miller, 97.

²⁰ Miller, 101; Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Daniel: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 76n51.

The context in Daniel 2 makes clear that “at the end of days” refers to the end of human history when human kingdoms will be replaced by the kingdom of God (v. 44). Cf. the same phrase in Hebrew in 10:14 in the context of the final vision with its double resurrection (12:2, 13) and the fullness of God’s kingdom (12:3).²¹

Third, though Scripture speaks of the kingdom coming in connection with the first advent (Mt 28:18; Acts 2:30–36; Eph 1:20–23; Col 1:13), this does not exhaust the Bible’s teaching about the coming of the kingdom (Mt 25:31; Acts 3:20–21).²² Psalm 110 provides a paradigm for understanding the two stages of the kingdom’s coming. At present the kingdom is coming in salvation, and Christ reigns in the midst of his enemies (Ps 110:1–2). In the future, the kingdom will come in judgment, and Christ will scatter kings in the day of his wrath (Ps 110:5–6). The destruction of “every rule and every authority and power” comes at “the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father” (1 Cor 15:24).

Fourth, though the gradual growth of the kingdom of God in the inter-advent period is a biblical idea (Mt 13:31–33), the concept of gradual growth seems to be read into Daniel 2:35 rather than out of it. Fifth, Daniel 7 confirms the eschatological reading of Daniel 2. The same four kingdoms found in Daniel 2 reappear in Daniel 7, symbolized as beasts (cf. 7:17, 23). The fourth beast, “terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong,” is linked to the legs of iron.²³ Both are in the fourth position, and iron describes the statue’s legs and the beast’s teeth.²⁴ The feet of iron and clay correspond to ten horns (indicating ten kings, 7:24).²⁵ In both cases, something related to but distinct from Rome is symbolized. E. J. Young notes,

Although, in order to indicate the essential unity of the fourth kingdom, the horns appear upon the head of the beast, it is obvious that these horns represent a later phase of the beast’s existence. After the characterization given in vs. 23, with its emphasis upon the conquering power of the beast (as in vs. 7), it is stated (vs. 24) that ten horns shall come *out of* this kingdom. This accords with the mention of the horns in vs. 7 *after* the description of the crushing power of the beast. . . . While the period of the ten horns is in existence, there *arises among* these kingdoms another, which uproots three and holds sway.²⁶

²¹ *Preaching Christ*, 76n51; also Hippolytus, *Daniel*, 78; Johann Gerhard, *Annotations on the Revelation of St. John the Theologian*, trans. Paul A. Rydecki (Malone, TX: Repristination, 2015), 112; Wood, 72–73.

²² Craig Blaising, “The Kingdom That Comes with Jesus: Premillennialism and the Harmony of Scripture,” *SBJT* 14/1(2010): 4; cf. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 247–48.

²³ Hippolytus, *Daniel*, 138 [4.8.2; 4.8.7]; Jerome, 75–76; Young, 146; Wood, 186; Archer, 87; Miller, 201; Steinmann, 347; Tanner, 411–12.

²⁴ Miller, 201n34; Steinmann, 347; Tanner, 411.

²⁵ Whether the numbers ten and three represent specific enumerations or not is a matter of debate. Some insist on a specific enumeration, noting that three seems to be a specific, rather than symbolic, number. Tanner, 456. Miller entertains this possibility, but he also notes, “If the number *ten* represents completeness, then *three* would signify *some* kings.” Miller, 213–14. It seems best not to be dogmatic on this point.

²⁶ *Daniel*, 148–149.

Young, along with interpreters from the church fathers onward, identifies the little horn with the Antichrist (7:8, 20, 24).²⁷ He concludes, “Thus, in one remarkable picture, the entire course of history is given from the appearance of the historical Roman Empire until the end of human government.”²⁸ Steinmann similarly says, “It seems that the vision given Daniel in 7:9–14, which is interpreted in 7:15–28, pictures in one scene the entire sweep of salvation history that includes Christ’s first advent, the church age, and Christ’s second advent.”²⁹ Notably, even these commentators who denied an eschatological referent to the feet of the statue in Daniel 2 see an eschatological referent to the little horn of Daniel 7.³⁰ When the little horn arises, it not only wars against the saints, but it “prevailed over them” (7:21). Young recognizes that this “directs our attention to the culmination of opposition to the people of God.”³¹

When that final opposition is overcome, the Son of Man’s kingdom is truly universal: “all peoples, nations, and languages” (7:14). It is also eternal: “his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (7:14).³² The bestial rule brought about by the twisting of the commission of Adam to rule will be set right by the last Adam, enabling the reign of a new humanity over the earth.³³

This phrase, “must . . . take place,” occurs three times at key junctures in the book: in 1:1, the opening verse; in 4:1, which is the beginning of the core section of the book; and in 22:6, the first

²⁷ Young, 150; cf. Hippolytus, *Daniel*, 136–37 (4.5.3; 4.7.1); Jerome, 77; Wood, 188; Miller, 202–3; Steinmann, 348–49; Tanner, 413.

²⁸ *Daniel*, 150.

²⁹ Steinmann, 329–30.

³⁰ Young understands the ten horns to represent kingdoms that emerged from Rome and bridge the time between ancient Rome and the rise of the little horn. *Daniel*, 149. However, Archer is certainly correct to note that the ten horns (which are ten kings; 7:24) must all be contemporaneous “since six remain in subservience to the aggressive little horn, after he has destroyed the other three.” “Daniel,” 87. Certainly the three subdued by the little horn must have been contemporaneous with each other. Tanner, 455. Revelation 17:12, drawing on this passage, also seems to indicate the Antichrist and these kings are contemporaneous. Miller, 213; Tanner, 455.

³¹ *Daniel*, 158.

³² Young argues that this “kingdom *cannot* be millennial, since it is clearly described as everlasting.” *Daniel*, 157. Miller responds by pointing readers to Robert Saucy’s comments about the transitional nature of the millennial kingdom: “The millennium is only the final transition phase leading to the eternal state.” Thus, “the messianic kingdom is merged with the final eschatological picture of the new heaven and earth.” Miller, 211; Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 288; cf. Tanner, 464.

³³ The Son of Man restores rightful human rule for eternity to “the saints of the Most High” (7:18). Some claim that these “holy ones” are angels. Collins, 312–19. The word can be used of angels (Dt 33:2; Ps 89:5; Dn 4:13; 4:17; 4:23; 8:13; Zec 14:5), but it can also be used of Israel (Ex 19:6; Dt 7:6; 26:19; Ps 16: 3; 34:10). See Tanner, 447n779. Several considerations favor a reference to God’s people here. First, verse 21 speaks of the horn prevailing in warfare over the holy ones. Since the horn is the king of an earthly kingdom, it is unlikely that the holy ones are angels. Steinmann, 370; Tanner, 447n779. This observation is strengthened by the link between Daniel 7:25 (“they [the holy ones] shall be given into his [the little horn’s] hand for a time, times, and half a time”) and Daniel 12:7 (“it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished”). Steinmann, 370. But the decisive objection is made by Steinmann: “The heirs of God’s kingdom are always God’s people.” (369; cf. Tanner, 449). This assertion is rooted in Genesis 1:28. God gave man dominion over the earth. The Son of Man, the true man, will restore that rule to redeemed mankind.

verse of the epilogue.³⁴ By drawing on Daniel 2 at these key junctures, John is able to signal to his readers where his visions fit in the eschatological scheme given to Daniel and expanded upon by Jesus. Specifically, John is signaling that his visions will be about the consummation of the kingdom as Jesus returns to judge the world in the ultimate Day of the Lord.

The Significance of “Soon” (Rv 1:1)

John’s statement that Revelation concerns events that “must soon take place” is a key piece of evidence for preterist or idealist interpreters. Preterists argue that “soon” indicates that the book is about events in John’s own day. This word should not be trimmed or reinterpreted; rather, it should be read in a straightforward manner and in light of many other “predictions of an imminent catastrophe” found in the NT.³⁵ For idealists, “soon” indicates that at least some of these events began to be fulfilled in John’s own day, even if others await the consummation.³⁶ G. K. Beale finds confirmation of this reading in Revelation 1:3, which says, “For the time is near.” He notes that in Mark 1:15, “Jesus uses this phrase to describe not merely the nearness of his ministry and of the kingdom, but the actual inauguration of them.”³⁷ Even apart from the Mark reference, idealist interpreters hold that this view is substantiated by the fact that the last days have been inaugurated even while believers await the consummation.³⁸

The fact that the last days have begun, however, does not necessarily mean that the visions of Revelation are primarily about the first century or the entire period between the two comings of Christ. Doubtless, the Day of the Lord judgment that culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 foreshadowed the ultimate Day of the Lord, and certainly valid applications from the book of Revelation can be made to the tribulations and victories of the church throughout the inter-advent period. However, Revelation 1:1, 3 are paralleled in 22:6–7, 10, 12, 20. The ambiguous expressions “soon take place” and “the time is near” are clarified by the words of Jesus in 22:7, 12, 20: “I am coming soon.” A reference to the *inauguration* of the last days would be more compelling if the immediate context (cf. 1:7) and parallels in the epilogue (22:6–7, 10, 12) were not so tightly tied to the Second Coming.³⁹

³⁴ Thomas, 54.

³⁵ Leithart, 70–71.

³⁶ Andrew of Caesarea, “Commentary on the Apocalypse,” in *Latin Commentaries on Revelation*, Ancient Christian Texts, ed. and trans. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), 114; Gerhard, 11; Beale, 153; Smalley, 40; Schreiner, 549–50.

³⁷ *Revelation*, 153.

³⁸ Schreiner, 549–50.

³⁹ The phrase “has come near” does not mean “is present” in Mark 1:15. Though the signs of the kingdom were present in Jesus’s ministry, he was not enthroned until the resurrection/ascension (Acts 2:32–36; 5:30–31; Eph 1:20–23). See Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 249, 251; Patrick Schreiner, *The Ascension of Christ* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 75.

Other passages, even in the OT, speak of the Second Coming or its accompanying events as coming “soon,” “near,” or “at hand.”⁴⁰ Though some of these passages may be speaking about nearness from the perspective of those who experience the fulfillment of the prophecy (Is 13:6),⁴¹ others most likely speak of the nearness of the eschatological Day of the Lord from God’s perspective. Deuteronomy 32:25 likely refers to eschatological judgment coming “swiftly,”⁴² in which case the swiftness must be reckoned from God’s point of view. Obadiah prophesied that the eschatological Day of the Lord was “near upon all the nations” (15).⁴³ Again, this nearness probably refers to God’s perspective (Ps 90:4).⁴⁴ Zephaniah prophesied that the great eschatological Day of the Lord was “near, near and hastening fast” (1:14, cf. 1:7).⁴⁵ O. Palmer Robertson notes that this idea of the nearness of the Day of the Lord is picked up by the NT.⁴⁶

Jesus said, in an eschatological parable, “[God] will give justice to them speedily [ἐν τάχει].” (Lk 18:7–8). Bock notes that though Luke recognizes that there is “a concern about the return’s delay,” he can still affirm the speedy return to give justice.⁴⁷ Marshall observes, “To the elect it may seem to be a long time until he answers, but afterwards they will realise that it was in fact short.”⁴⁸

Paul, referring to the Day of the Lord,⁴⁹ wrote of “salvation” being “nearer” and “the day” being “at hand” (Rom 13:11–12). Later in Romans, Paul wrote, “The God of peace will soon [ἐν τάχει] crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (Rom 16:20). Cranfield observes, “That the promise refers to the eschatological consummation, and not to some special divine deliverance in the course of their lives, seems to us virtually certain.”⁵⁰ Cranfield holds that verse 20

⁴⁰ R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 6; Ladd, 22; Osborne, 55; Schreiner, 549–50; Fanning, 75.

⁴¹ Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–18*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 419.

⁴² Jonathan Edwards, *The “Blank Bible,” The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 24:390–10; cf. Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 764.

⁴³ Though the Book of Obadiah is focused on the judgment of Edom, this verse, encompassing as it does all the nations, is eschatological in scope. Paul Raabe, *Obadiah*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 191; Irvin A. Busenitz, *Commentary on Joel and Obadiah*, MC (Great Britain: Mentor, 2003), 270; Daniel I. Block, *Obadiah*, ZECOT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 81; Max Rogland, “Obadiah,” in *Daniel-Malachi*, ESVEC (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 383.

⁴⁴ Rogland, 383.

⁴⁵ J. Alec Motyer, “Zephaniah,” in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker 1998), 922.

⁴⁶ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 281.

⁴⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1453. He does note that this may be partially explained by the inaugurated last days.

⁴⁸ Marshall, 676; cf. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Luke*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1922), 414; Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 446.

⁴⁹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 820–22; cf. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 165–167, 169; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, 2nd ed., BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 677–78.

⁵⁰ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 803.

speaks of eschatological victory without reference to the opponents of 16:17–19.⁵¹ Schreiner grants a connection to the false teachers mentioned in 16:17–19, but he believes the victory over those opponents is eschatological.⁵² Murray and Moo teach that the ultimate victory is eschatological, though they think there may be realizations of the victory throughout the history of the church.⁵³ Jewett thinks that since the enemies will be crushed under the church of Rome’s feet, rather than Christ’s, a temporal victory is in view.⁵⁴ The last view is unlikely since believers participate in eschatological judgment (2 Tm 2:12; 1 Cor 6:1–3).⁵⁵

Paul told the Corinthians that “the appointed time has grown very short” because “the present form of this world is passing away” (1 Cor 7:29, 31). With the Day of the Lord the present form of this world will be replaced by life in the new creation.⁵⁶ Christians now live in the last days expecting the coming of Christ.⁵⁷ Likewise, Paul told the Philippians, “The Lord is at hand” (4:5). It is best to understand this in reference to the temporal nearness of the coming of the Lord.⁵⁸

The same pattern is found in the General Epistles. The Book of Hebrews speaks about “the Day drawing near” (10:25). Philip Edgcumbe Hughes observes, “When spoken of in this absolute manner, ‘the Day’ can mean only the last day, that ultimate eschatological day, which is the day of reckoning and judgment, known as the Day of the Lord.”⁵⁹ James said, “For the coming of the Lord is at hand. . . . The Judge is standing at the door” (5:8–9). McCartney notes, “Three other NT authors use this verb (ἐγγίζω, *engízō*) to speak of the day of judgment or the arrival of the Lord (Rom. 10 13:12; Heb. 10:25; 1 Pet. 4:7).”⁶⁰ This is likely James’s meaning as well. First Peter 4:7 reads, “The end of all

⁵¹ *Romans*, 803.

⁵² *Romans*, 799.

⁵³ Murray, *Romans*, 237; Moo, *Romans*, 933.

⁵⁴ Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009): 995.

⁵⁵ See Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 581n19.

⁵⁶ Gregor J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, CC (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2000), 257.

⁵⁷ See especially Lockwood, 255–56, and Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Corinthians*, TOTC (London: Inter-Varsity, 2018), 156.; cf. Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 344.

⁵⁸ Peter T. O’Brien, *Philippians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 489; Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 408; Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 198; G. Waler Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 289.

⁵⁹ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 416; cf. Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 291; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991), 290; George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 346; Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews*, AYB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) 446; Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 371; Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 481; Dennis E. Johnson, “Hebrews,” in *Hebrews-Revelation*, ESVEC (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 147, 150.

⁶⁰ Dan G. McCartney, *James*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 241. Scot McKnight argues that the term “at hand” cannot simply refer to the imminence of the Second Coming. He claims it must be “understood as referring to something about to happen,” namely the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70. *The Letter of James*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 411–12. However, this requires McKnight to conclude (406–7) that the Olivet Discourse should be read in a preterist manner and that Paul, in allusions to the Olivet Discourse, understood Parousia differently from Jesus (and James). Not only is it theologically problematic for Paul to understand the Olivet Discourse differently from Jesus and

things is at hand.” Thus, the next major event of redemptive history is the Second Coming.⁶¹ Though some have argued that this is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Sam Storms observes, “It seems strange to speak of it as ‘the end of all things.’” In addition, he questions the relevance of the destruction of Jerusalem as a motivating factor for Christians living in Asia Minor.⁶²

This survey of passages indicates that the “soon” and “near” language can refer to the final Day of the Lord.⁶³ This is confirmed by the fact that the context (Rv 1:7) and parallels with the epilogue (22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20) clearly indicate that the events of the Second Coming are coming soon.

“He Who Is to Come” (Rv 1:4)

The Father is described as “he who is and who was and who comes.”⁶⁴ “He who is” is an allusion to God’s revelation of his name to Moses: “I am The One Who Is” (Ex 3:14, NET).⁶⁵ He “who was” points to God’s eternity (Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12).⁶⁶ He “who comes” refers to the eschatological arrival of YHWH.⁶⁷ Since the remainder of John’s designation of the source of grace and peace refers to the Spirit and to the Son, this title refers to the Father. Interestingly, verse 7 identifies Jesus as the one who “is coming with the clouds.” In the epilogue, which parallels the prologue in many ways, Jesus says, “I am coming soon” (Rv 22:12; cf. 22:16). According to Tabb, the coming of the Son “will bring to pass the promised eschatological coming of Yahweh.”⁶⁸ However, Daniel 7:22 (cf. 7:9–10) indicates that the coming of the Father brings about the coming of the Son.

Understanding the location of the thrones among which “the Ancient of Days took his seat” (7:9) is vital for understanding the coming of the Father. Goldingay gives three compelling reasons for an earthly location for these thrones:

A number of descriptions of God on his throne of fire surrounded by numerous attendants locate the scene in the heavens: see 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Ps 82; 1 En. 14:18–22; 40:1; 60:1–2; 71; 91:15–16; Rev 4–5. Where it is specifically a matter of God judging, however, the scene is normally on earth: see Jer 49:38;

James, but it is also unlikely that James is warning Christian Jews in the dispersion about their being judged by the Lord in the AD 70 judgment on Jerusalem (McKnight, 67–68). More likely is the view that Christians are in the last days and that the return of Christ is imminent; the Judge could pass through the doors at any moment.

⁶¹ John Lille, *Lectures on the First and Second Epistles of Peter* (New York: Scribner, 1868), 274–75; Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 180; D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, IN: BBH, 1992), 269; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 210; Sam Storms, “1 Peter,” in *Hebrews–Revelation*, ESVEC (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 347; cf. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 293–94.

⁶² “1 Peter,” 347.

⁶³ The above survey intentionally drew liberally from non-futurist and often amillennial interpreters to indicate that the survey itself was not biased toward this outcome.

⁶⁴ Translation from Leithart, 87.

⁶⁵ G. K. Beale and Sean McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 1089; Tabb, 31.

⁶⁶ Beale, *Revelation*, 187.

⁶⁷ Tabb, 33.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

Joel 3 [4]:1–2, 12; Zech 14:1–5; Pss 50; 96:10–13; 1 En. 1:3–9; 25:3; 90:20–27. In Dan 7 Daniel has been watching a scene on earth, and the account gives no indication that the scene has changed. Rather, the opening phrase of v. 9 implies a continuity of perspective: Daniel continues to look in the direction he had been looking. Setting up the thrones suggests an earthly location (in the heavens they are already set up), as does the later talk of the one advanced in years coming (v. 22).⁶⁹

The scene is one of judgment (7:10), and that judgment falls specifically on the little horn and the fourth beast in a judgment of fire (7:11). The idea that the coming of the Father in judgment brings about the coming of the Son is confirmed in Psalm 110:1 and Psalm 2:8–9. In Psalm 110 YHWH makes the Messiah's enemies his footstool, and in Psalm 2 the Father and the Son are active in together subduing the nations. It may also be significant that in the new creation both the Father and the Son are mentioned as dwelling on earth (Rv 21:22; 22:3). Thus, both the Father and the Son "come" to earth by the end of the book (and by the end of the age).

Since the Father in his omnipresence is already here, the coming of the Father (unlike the bodily coming of Jesus) is not spatial. Thus, his coming in judgment to facilitate the coming of the Son in judgment points readers toward a futurist interpretation of this passage.

"The Seven Spirits Who Are before His Throne" (Rv 1:4)

The "seven spirits who are before [the Father's] throne" has been understood from the earliest interpreters to refer to the Holy Spirit and to allude to Isaiah 11:2 with its sevenfold listing of the gifts of the Spirit.⁷⁰ In Isaiah 11, the Spirit rests upon a shoot from the stump of Jesse, a reference to the Davidic Messiah.⁷¹ By resting upon the Messiah, the Spirit becomes the "source" of the characteristics

⁶⁹ John Goldingay, *Daniel*, rev. ed., WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019) 361.

⁷⁰ Victorinus of Petovium, "Commentary on the Apocalypse," in *Latin Commentaries on Revelation*, Ancient Christian Texts, trans. William C. Weinrich (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), 1 (1.1); Apringius of Beja, "Explanation of the Revelation by the Most Learned Man, Apringius, Bishop of the Church at Pax," in *Latin Commentaries on Revelation*, 24; Beale, 189; Osborne, 61; Tabb, 69–70. Some object to this potential allusion because in the Hebrew only six characteristics are listed, in distinction from the seven listed in the LXX. Thomas, 68. However, if "Spirit of YHWH" is included in the count, then the Hebrew as well would include a sevenfold designation of the Spirit. Another view, also going back to early interpreters, is that the seven spirits are seven angels. Oecumenius, 4; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 47–48. However, this would break the Trinitarian pattern that is present in these verses. It may be that the angelic interpretation was a way to avoid the idea that there are actually seven spirits in the Godhead rather than one Holy Spirit. Leithart addresses this objection: "We must not conclude that the Father is a triple personality simply because he is given this triple name, and the Spirit is not seven Persons." The seven refers to the Spirit's work, not to his Person. Leithart, 89.

⁷¹ Motyer argues, "The reference to Jesse indicates that the shoot is not just another king in David's line but rather another David. In the books of Kings, successive kings were assessed by comparison with their father David' (e.g. 2 Ki. 18:3) but no king is called 'David' or 'son of Jesse'. Among the kings, David alone was 'the son of Jesse' (e.g. 1 Sa. 20:27–33; 1 Ki. 12:16), and the unexpected reference to Jesse here has tremendous force: when Jesse produces a shoot it must be David." J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 121. Richard Bauckham calls this "probably the most popular text of Davidic messianism in early Judaism." "The Messianic Interpretation of Isaiah 10:34," in *The Jewish World around the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 193. See also John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (1852; reprint, Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2010), 1:372; Young, *Isaiah*, 380; Herbert Wolf, *Interpreting Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 103.

the Messiah needs to fulfill his messianic task.⁷² The coming of the Spirit to rest upon the Messiah happened at his baptism (Jn 1:32; cf. Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22).

However, the following verses in Isaiah 11 do not focus on the ministry of Jesus during his first advent. They focus on his coming with judgment: “He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked” (11:4). This passage seems to be picked up by Paul with reference to the killing of Antichrist “with the breath of his mouth” at “the appearance of his coming” (2 Thes 2:8).⁷³ The “rod of his mouth” has resonances with the “sharp sword” that comes from the Messiah’s mouth at his return (Rv 19:15).⁷⁴

The effect the Messiah’s righteous judgment will be a reversal of the effects of the Fall and a restoration of creation.⁷⁵ Older interpreters rejected as a “judaizing” view the idea that the passage truly predicts a change in the animal world such that carnivorous animals will become friendly with prey animals.⁷⁶ These older amillennialists were uncomfortable with including in redemption the restoration of all creation. This discomfort is no longer shared by current amillennialists. E. J. Young notes, “Isaiah has placed great stress upon the animals themselves, and this very fact shows that it is impossible to carry through in detail a figurative interpretation.”⁷⁷ He further notes, drawing on Hengstenberg, that Genesis 1:30 gave to the animals only plants to eat. Isaiah 11 is thus prophesying the restoration of creation.⁷⁸ This is precisely what we would expect in light of passages preceding predictions that redemption will encompass the animal world (Lv 26:6; Hos 2:18; Am 9:13–14; cf. Is

⁷² Young, 381–82; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 279; Motyer, *Isaiah*, 122; Edward E. Hindson, “Isaiah 11:1–16: The Reign of the Righteous Messianic King,” in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy*, ed. Michael Rydelink and Edwin Blum (Chicago: Moody, 2019), 849.

⁷³ William De Burgh, *The Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah*, (Dublin: Hodges, Smith, and Co., 1863), 91; Oswalt, 281. E. J. Young also references 2 Thessalonians 2:8, noting, “At the great last day of judgment, the voice of God will speak and the wicked will perish everlastingly” (385). See also G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 221–22; Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1–2 Thessalonians*. BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 534.

⁷⁴ De Burgh, 92; Oswalt 281; Motyer, *Isaiah*, 123. John Calvin and Matthew Poole both connect the imagery in this verse to the preaching of the gospel by which, in Poole’s words, “he subdued the world to himself, and will destroy his enemies.” Calvin, 379; Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible* (New York: Robert Carter, 1853), 2:354. However, understanding the sword and the breath to be the preaching of the gospel fits uncomfortably with the emphasis on judgment in both Isaiah 11 and in the New Testament allusions back to Isaiah 11:4.

⁷⁵ De Burgh, 94–95.

⁷⁶ Joseph A. Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah* (1867; repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992), 1:253; cf. Poole, 2:354.

⁷⁷ *Isaiah*, 390.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 390–91. J. Alec Motyer and Geoffrey Grogan also cite Gn 1:29–30, and Motyer speaks of “Eden restored.” Motyer, *Isaiah*, 124; Geoffrey W. Grogan. “Isaiah,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 6:545. On this passage as prophesying a restoration of creation, see also Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. James Martin, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (1866–91; reprint, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 7:184; Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 66. Oswalt misses the allusion to Genesis 1:29–30 and thus erroneously concludes that the passage must be figurative because “the lion’s carnivorousness is fundamental to what a lion is” (283). Oswalt also thinks a figurative interpretation is more likely because he does not wish to constrain the “they” in 11:9 to animals alone (284). However, since a human is mentioned in v. 8, humans are naturally included within the “they” of 11:9. Williamson notes, “The inclusion of human characters in the passage is a telling argument against any such [allegorical] approach.” H. G. M. Williamson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1–27*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 2018), 2:657.

35:1, 6; 30:26; 31:19; 60:20; 65:17; 66:22; Ez 34:25).⁷⁹ Such an interpretation is confirmed by later Scripture (Zec 14:6–8; Rom 8:20–21; 1 Cor 15:25–28; Heb 2:5–9).⁸⁰ Young observes that “this condition will not be realized until the earth is covered with the knowledge of the Lord, and that condition will only obtain in the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”⁸¹

The futurist thrust to Isaiah 11:3–9 places a futurist thrust on this title of the Spirit. The futurist understanding of this title is strengthened given its reappearance in Revelation 4:5 in connection with the “flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder” that emanate from the throne. This theophanic imagery recurs throughout the central section of the book and climaxes with the pouring out of the seventh bowl and the fall of Babylon the great (16:18–21).⁸²

“The Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the Dead, and the Ruler of Kings on Earth” (Rv 1:5)

John’s threefold description of Jesus, “faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth,” alludes to Psalm 89:27, 37 [88:28, 38, LXX].⁸³ In Psalm 89:38 the moon is the “faithful witness” testifying that the Davidic covenant will be as enduring as the moon.⁸⁴ John applies the title to Christ as the one who will fulfill what the moon testified to.⁸⁵ The phrases “firstborn from the dead” and “ruler of kings on earth” allude to Psalm 89:27. Psalm 89 is an affirmation of the enduring Davidic covenant in the face of circumstances that make it appear as though God would fail to keep the covenant. The cry, “How long” (Ps 89:46), is not a cry of despair but of hope. At some point in the future, YHWH will no longer hide himself; he will display his steadfast love for David.

⁷⁹ Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1–39*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 268–269. Edward Adams, *The Stars Will Fall from Heaven: Cosmic Catastrophe in the New Testament and Its World*, Library of New Testament Studies (New York: T&T Clark 2007), 34. Leviticus 26:3–12 describe the eschatological blessings Israel would have enjoyed for obedience to the Mosaic covenant. Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 2000), 315; Richard S. Hess, “Leviticus,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 1:813. Hosea 2:18 picks up on the Leviticus 26 passage and envisions a future realization of these blessings in the new covenant. Duane A. Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1997), 87; Peter J. Gentry & Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 530. The other passages noted above all seem to be eschatological passages as well.

⁸⁰ De Burgh, 95; Grogan, 6:545; Adams, 34.

⁸¹ *Isaiah*, 391; cf. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 125. Young does qualify this statement by saying this is true of the passage “in its fullness.” He is willing to also grant the figurative interpretation, in which “peace is introduced into the hearts of men,” as a valid understanding of the passage for the present time. However, given the “creation regained” understanding of the passage, the figurative reading lacks exegetical warrant.

⁸² One might object to the claimed futurist thrust of this title for the Spirit by noting that the actual anointing of Jesus by the Spirit took place at the beginning of Jesus’s earthly ministry. However, this is mitigated by the fact that John the Baptist alluded to Isaiah 10:34–11:4 in a statement concerning the eschatological judgment that the Messiah would bring (Mt 3:10–12; Lk 3:9, 15–17). When John speaks of a baptism by fire, he is referring the fire of judgment. Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, ed. Raymond O. Zorn., trans., H. de Jongste (Philadelphia: P&R, 1962), 29–30; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 34–35. On John the Baptist’s allusion to Isaiah 10:34, see Bauckham, 200–204.

⁸³ Thomas, 69; Beale, *Revelation*, 190; Osborne, 62.

⁸⁴ John Goldingay, *Psalms 42–89*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker 2007), 683–84; Geoffrey Grogan *Psalms*, THOTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 156.

⁸⁵ One might wonder if Psalm 89 is really being alluded to here, but this is one of the few places in the LXX where this phrase occurs (elsewhere only Prv 14:5, 25; Is 8:2; Jer 49:5).

The psalmist calls on God to remember with confidence that he will establish his rule on earth through a Davidic king.⁸⁶ One might think that this prayer was answered with the resurrection, ascension, and session of Christ as the Davidic king (Acts 2:33–36; Ps 110:1). But Psalm 89 looked forward to the destruction of the Davidic king’s enemies (89:23) and to his rule over the kings of the earth (89:27). At present Jesus reigns as the Davidic king in the midst of his enemies (Ps 110:2); in the future he will “shatter kings on the day of his wrath” (Ps 110:5). The hope of Psalm 89 thus remains future for the Christian today.⁸⁷

The middle title, “firstborn from the dead,” is a clear allusion to Colossians 1:18, “He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.” Here, “firstborn” probably indicates both the Son’s preeminence and the fact that he was the first to rise from the dead (cf. 1 Cor 15:20). As Moo observes, “The resurrection of Christ initiates [the] end-time resurrection; his resurrection guarantees and, indeed, stimulates the resurrection of all who follow (1 Cor 15:20; cf. Acts 26:23; Mt 27:52–53).”⁸⁸ There is a purpose that the resurrection is driving towards: “that in everything he might be preeminent.” Though this could be understood as a present preeminence, Moo argues that the future is in view:

However, while it is no doubt true that Christ, through his resurrection, has been installed as lord over all, it is also true that he has yet to manifest that Lordship over fallen and rebellious creation. We do “not yet” see all things placed under his feet (1 Cor. 15:25–28; Heb. 2:8; cf. Phil. 2:11). We therefore suggest that the clause here is a true purpose clause, expressing God’s intention of ultimately bringing all of creation under his rule through Christ.⁸⁹

Thus, these titles of Christ, as with the titles of the Father and the Holy Spirit, are looking forward to the future arrival and triumph of the Davidic Messiah’s rule over the earth. Given this focus, readers should anticipate the book to be about the Messiah’s coming to triumph over his enemies and to establish his rule on the earth.

“A Kingdom, Priests” (Rv 1:6)

Verse 6, by noting that Jesus made his people “a kingdom, priests to his God and Father,” alludes to Exodus 19:5–6, where God first laid out the basic conditions and blessings of the Mosaic covenant.⁹⁰ By identifying Israel as a kingdom of priests, God identified Israel as a “royal company

⁸⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms* (Wheaton: Crossway 2013), 51.

⁸⁷ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 42–89*, KEL (Grand Rapids: Kregel 2013), 829.

⁸⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 129.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁹⁰ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC (Nashville: B&H 2006), 422; Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, KEL (Grand Rapids: Kregel 2014), 459; T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, AOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity 2017), 370; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 14.

consisting of priests.”⁹¹ Exodus 19:5–6 itself alludes back to Genesis 1:26–28, which reveals that “God intended humanity as a whole to rule as his vice regents over all other creatures [= kings] and to enjoy intimate fellowship with God himself [= priests].”⁹² Notably, Israel was called to this mission in the promised land because Adam had failed to rule in submission to God’s greater rule but rebelled against God. Like Adam, Israel failed to meet the condition of its covenant: “Obey my voice and keep my covenant.” Thus, in the New Covenant Jews and Gentiles are brought together in the church to be “a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Pt 2:9).⁹³

Though there is an inaugurated aspect to both the kingly and priestly offices that the Christian possesses in Christ, a consummated aspect of both these offices remains to be realized. Thomas Manton observed that Christians, with regard to their kingly office, await the day when they will “tread Satan under [their] feet.” Furthermore, the day is future when Christians will be “sitting upon thrones with Christ at his coming, judging the world and angels themselves: Matt 19:28..., Luke 22:29, 30, ... Ps 49:14, ... 1 Cor. 6:2, ... Luke 12:32, ... 2 Tim. 2:12.”⁹⁴ Manton further argued that the Christian priesthood has a future aspect to it. Though Christians do presently “offer up a sacrifice of praise to God” (Heb 13:15), to fully enter into their priesthood Christians must be sanctified and enter fully into God’s presence where they will offer eternal praise (Rv 7:14–16).⁹⁵ Revelation 5:10 specifies that this will be a future reign and a future priestly ministry that will take place on the earth. For premillennialists, this future priestly reign is fulfilled when the resurrected saints “will be priests of God and of Christ” who “will reign with him for a thousand years” (Rv 20:6). However, interpreters of whatever millennial viewpoint can hold that the dominion God intended for mankind at creation will be fulfilled in the eternal state (Rv 22:5).

⁹¹ John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspective on a Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6*, JSOTSupp 395 (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 75; cf. Alexander, 378, who notes that in the phrase “kingdom of Og,” Og is the king; thus a “kingdom of priests” identifies the priests as the kings.

⁹² Alexander, 368.

⁹³ Beale concludes that the combination of Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9, and Revelation 1:6 indicates that the Church is now the new Israel. *Revelation*, 193–94. It is better, especially in light of 1 Peter 2:9, to see an Israel typology at work. OT Israel was the people of God in the era of redemptive history governed by the Mosaic Covenant. The Church is the new covenant people of God. The fact that both function as the people of God accounts for the continuity. W. E. Glenny, “The Israelite Imagery of 1 Peter 2,” in *Israel, Dispensationalism, and the Church: The Search for Definition*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 180, 183; Saucy, 205–6; cf. Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* (Nashville, B&H, 2010), 147–50. However, there is an advance from the type to the reality in that the Church by union with the Messiah and the indwelling of the Spirit is in a much fuller way a royal priesthood. Glenny, 182–183. Israel failed at its mission to be a kingdom of priests, but the Church will carry forward this priestly mission. See Schreiner. *1 Peter*, 114–116. On this reading, it can be said that OT Israel’s function as the people of God is replaced by the Church as the NT people of God. But the *nation* of Israel as an entity to whom promises were made does not disappear with the genesis of the Church. Believing Israelites are joined with believing Gentiles in this new people called the Church. To identify the Church as Israel is thus a category confusion. Israelites and people from every other ethnicity are united in Christ so that they become one new man (Eph 2:15). But this union does not make Gentiles Jews or deprive Jews of their Israelite identity. This is clear from Romans 11, where the natural branches that are broken off or grafted back retain their Israelite identity (Rom 11:17–24).

⁹⁴ Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton* (London: James Nisbet, 1874), 19:95.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 91, 95–96, 98.

“Glory and Dominion Forever and Ever” (Rv 1:6)

The phrase “glory and dominion forever and ever” may allude to Daniel 7:14 in the Hebrew: “And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom. . . . His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away.”⁹⁶ This statement comes as part of Daniel’s vision of the Son of Man coming to receive his kingdom. When this takes place is a matter of debate, but the next section will argue that it occurs at the Second Coming.

“Coming with the Clouds” (Rv 1:7)

The declaration of verse 7, that Jesus comes with clouds and that those who pierced him will see him and mourn, alludes to Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10.⁹⁷ Daniel 7 pictures a world ruled by ferocious beasts. Human rule in rebellion to God’s greater rule is bestial.⁹⁸ In contrast to the beasts, one like a Son of Man will come to rule in submission to God. By the title Son of Man, humanity is indicated, but by coming with the clouds of heaven, this person is shown to be a divine figure (Ex 13:21; 16:10; 19:9, 16; Lv 16:2; Dt 1:33; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; Pss 18:10–12; 68:4; 97:2; 104:3; Is 19:1; Jer 4:13).⁹⁹ This passage, rightly understood, heralded a future ruler over all the earth who would be both God and man and, as man, would rule the earth as Adam was intended to in the first place.¹⁰⁰ In doing so, he will restore redeemed humanity to the rightful exercise of dominion over the earth (Dn 7:27). John’s doxology thus looks to the reversal of the Fall and the restoration of the creation blessing (Gn 1:28) when Christ returns to set up his kingdom.

Beale proposes that Daniel 7:13 may refer to “the whole course of the church age,” including, but not limited to the Second Coming.¹⁰¹ In support of this thesis, Beale follows R. T. France’s interpretation of the Olivet Discourse in suggesting that “Dan. 7:13 in Mark 13:26 and 14:62 refers not to the final coming of Christ, but to the Son of man’s coming in judgment of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.”¹⁰²

⁹⁶ The LXX does not reflect the Hebrew text at this point.

⁹⁷ Thomas, 76; Beale, *Revelation*, 196; Osborne, 68.

⁹⁸ Hamilton, 90.

⁹⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *Notes on Scripture*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 15:235; Miller, 210; Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 187; Hamilton, 149–50; Tanner, 441.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton, 91; Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 40. The NT clearly identifies the “one like a son of man” with Christ through allusions to this very passage (Mt 24:30 || Mk 13:26; Mt 26:64; Mk 8:38; Mk 14:62 || Lk 21:27; Rv 1:7). This view reaches back to the earliest interpreters and is defended by conservative interpreters up through the present. Hippolytus, *Daniel*, 141; Paul L. Maier, ed., *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 26–27 (1.2); Jerome, 80; Edwards, *Notes*, 235; Bavinck, 248–49; B. B. Warfield, “The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament,” in *The Works of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield* (1932; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 3:42; Archer, 91; Steinmann, 357–58. N. T. Wright argues for a corporate interpretation of the Son of Man. *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God (London: SPCK, 1992) 291–319. For a response to this view, see Tanner, 421n724; 435; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 392n15.

¹⁰¹ Beale, *Revelation*, 197–98.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 197–98. Unlike France, Beale suggests that “the final parousia could be in mind” as well.

France's position is that Matthew 24:4–35 || Mark 13:5–31 is entirely focused on the disciples' questions regarding the destruction of the Temple. The topic does not shift to the Second Coming of Christ until Matthew 24:36 || Mark 13:32. Thus the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds is not the return of Christ but his heavenly enthronement.¹⁰³ France argues that the cosmic language of Matthew 25:29 || Mark 13:24–26 (cf. Lk 21:27) is OT language for “far-reaching political change.” Further, Daniel 7, in its original context, is about the enthronement of the Messiah in heaven, not his return to earth.¹⁰⁴ What is seen is not the Son of Man literally returning in the clouds but the effects of his enthronement: “The destruction of the temple (expressed in the strongly ‘visual’ imagery of vv. 24b–25) and the gathering of the international people of God (v. 27).”¹⁰⁵

The difficulties of this view are manifold. Acts 1:11 indicates that the return in the clouds will be visible, as does the reference to “glory” (Mt 24:30; cf. Mk 13:26) and the imagery of lightning (Mt 24:27)¹⁰⁶ Finally interpreters should not minimize the extent of Jesus's eschatological victory:

Readings like France's truncate Jesus's eschatology, which brings the reign of heaven to earth (Mt. 6:10) and renews the world (Mt. 19:28). If all this has already occurred, one wonders at the underwhelming denouement of the glorious future promised by the biblical prophets, John, and Jesus himself.¹⁰⁷

In light of these considerations, it is best to understand Matthew 24:30 || Mark 13:26 || Luke 21:27 as referring to the Second Coming of Christ.¹⁰⁸

France also argues that Matthew 26:64 || Mark 14:62 clearly locates the timing of the Daniel 7:13 events within the generation living during Jesus's earthly ministry.¹⁰⁹ But Davies and Allison decisively reject the claim that in these verses (or in Daniel 7) the Son's coming on the clouds is his ascension to heaven:

There has been some discussion whether the image in our text is of the Son of man going to God—an ascension and enthronement—or coming to earth from God—the parousia. In support of the former one might observe that elsewhere in the NT Ps 110:1 is used to depict Jesus' enthronement at

¹⁰³ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 498, 500–1; idem., *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2007), 293–24.

¹⁰⁴ France, *Mark*, 500–1, 534; cf. France, *Matthew*, 396, 923.

¹⁰⁵ France, *Mark*, 535.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 807–9.

¹⁰⁷ David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 584.

¹⁰⁸ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, ACNT (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1886), 490; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, CGTC (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 406; D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 9:567–68; Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 362–63; D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 381–82; Bock, 1686; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 740; W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 361–62; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 983; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 202; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 585–86.

¹⁰⁹ R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Vancouver, B.C.: Regent College Press), 1998), 140–42; 23 5.

his ascension. Moreover, Dan 7:13 says that the one like a son of man ‘came to’ the Ancient of Days, and Matthew’s redactional ἀπ’ ἄρτι might be thought a pointer to the immediate future, which could therefore be Jesus’ exaltation but not his parousia. On the other hand, Daniel 7 is a theophany which issues in the earthly rule of the one like a son of man (v. 14); and v. 22 speaks of the Ancient of Days coming (to earth) for judgement. Further, in Mk 14:62=Mt 26:64 sitting is mentioned before coming, which means that the coming must be to earth, for ‘Jesus patently cannot come to God either at the same time as, or shortly after, he is already sitting at his side’. But the decisive point, at least at the level of Matthew’s understanding, is that everywhere else in our Gospel the coming of the Son of man refers to the parousia; and in 19:28 and 25:31 the sitting on a throne belongs not to the Son of man’s present reign but the eschatological future.¹¹⁰

The question then becomes how to make sense of the “from now on” in Matthew 26:64. On France’s view the *terminus ad quo* for the “now” in “from now on” is AD 70. However, “from now on” does not admit a delay of several decades. It is better to understand Jesus as saying that from that point forward “they would not see him as he now stands before them but only in his capacity as undisputed King Messiah and sovereign Judge.”¹¹¹ There is an already/not yet aspect to this passage, but that is because in these verses the allusion to Daniel 7:13 is paired with an allusion to Psalm 110:1. In the Olivet Discourse and Revelation 1:7 the Daniel 7:13 allusion is paired with an allusion to Zechariah 12:10. That combination focuses on the not yet. In addition, it is worth noting that the seating of Christ precedes his coming in the clouds in this passage.

Thus, NT usage points to a Second Coming referent to Daniel 7:13–14. Certain contextual factors in Daniel 7 also make it more likely that an exclusively eschatological coming is in view. Daniel’s perspective in this vision is earthly (7:2). As already noted, there are compelling reasons to believe that the thrones set up in verse 9 refer to a court of judgment that has been set up on earth.¹¹² Furthermore, the multiple thrones probably refer not only to the enthronement of the Messiah at the right hand of YHWH (cf. Ps 110:1; Mt 26:64) but also to the enthronement of the saints to rule with him (Dn 7:18, 21, 27; Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30; 22:5).¹¹³ Verses 21–22 state that the boastful horn “made war with the saints and prevailed over them until the Ancient of Days came.” The language of coming implies an earthly location. The fact that war is made on the saints until the Ancient of Days comes (to earth) implies that the timing is eschatological.¹¹⁴ As Longman notes, “The battle will continue until the final day.”¹¹⁵ The eschatological culmination of this vision is also made clear by the fact that destruction of the bestial kingdom is decisive and gives way to the everlasting messianic kingdom (Dn

¹¹⁰ Davies and Allison, 531.

¹¹¹ Carson, 555; cf. Davies and Allison, 530–31; Luz, 430.

¹¹² Otto Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, LC (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2008), 154; Layton MacDonald Talbert, “The Theonomic Postmillennialism of Christian Reconstruction: A Contrast with Traditional Postmillennialism and a Premillennial Assessment” (PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 1992), 164n75; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 361.

¹¹³ Steinmann, 350–51.

¹¹⁴ Davies and Allison, 531; Tanner, 442.

¹¹⁵ Longman, 198; cf. 189–90; cf. Young, *Daniel*, 158, 159.

7:26–27).¹¹⁶ Thus, when the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, he is coming from heaven to earth.¹¹⁷ Daniel’s vision of the Son of Man coming with the clouds is a vision of the Second Coming.¹¹⁸ The allusion to Daniel 7 is therefore another indication that John intends for Revelation to be read in a futurist interpretive framework.¹¹⁹

“Every Eye Will See Him” (Rv 1:7)

Further evidence that the Daniel 7:13 allusion refers to the future consummation of Christ’s reign is found in the fact that John pairs it with an allusion to Zechariah 12:10, a passage that refers to the Second Coming.

Anthony Petterson, however, argues that the “day” Zechariah 12 repeatedly refers to is, first of all, the day of the “crucifixion of the Messiah Jesus.” This is when the kingdom came. Only secondarily does the day refer to the Second Coming. Petterson takes this dual reference to indicate that “the ‘day’ also becomes the period of time in between.”¹²⁰ In Petterson’s reading, which he acknowledges to be “a little speculative,” the nations gathering to attack Jerusalem refers to the nations

¹¹⁶ Archer, 48.

¹¹⁷ Talbert, 164n75.

¹¹⁸ Justin Martyr, “Dialogue,” 192–93 (ch. 31); Hippolytus, “Antichrist,” 213 (§44); Theodoret of Cyr, “Commentary on Daniel,” 7.13–14, in Kenneth Stevenson and Michael Gluerup, eds. *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008), 236–37; Eusebius, “Church History,” 1.2 in Maier, 26–27; Archer, 90; Miller, 207; Steinmann, 359–60; Tanner, 442.

¹¹⁹ Jonathan Edwards proposed that “came with the clouds of heaven” was “equally applicable to both [the Son’s] ascension into heaven, when he went to receive his kingdom and to be invested with his royal dominion and glory, and his last coming at the day of judgment, which is called his ‘coming in his kingdom.’” Edwards, *Notes*, 236. In support of this view, Edwards noted that the angel told the disciples that Jesus would return “in like manner” to his ascension (Acts 1:11). Edwards claimed that “like manner” included more than the Son’s ascending and returning with clouds. In both the ascension and return angels accompany Jesus. Edwards also suggested that saints who rose from the dead immediately after Jesus’s resurrection (Mt 27:52–53) ascended with Jesus. Thus, saints accompany Jesus on both his ascension and return. Edwards, *Notes*, 236.

Edwards was right to note the similarities between Daniel 7 and the ascension. It is true that when the Son ascended in the clouds, he was enthroned at the right hand of YHWH (Ps 110:1 with Acts 2: 34–35; Ps 2:6–7 with Acts 13:33–34). Greidanus, 221–22; Hamilton, 148–49; cf. Tanner, 442. Stephen’s vision of the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God possibly “reflects a combination of Psalm 110 and Daniel 7” (Acts 7:55–56). Steinmann, 359. Daniel 7 as a whole has numerous links with both Psalms 2 and 110. The beastly kingdoms of Daniel 7 correspond to the raging nations in Psalm 2. In all three passages the Son of Man is enthroned over the kings of earth, and the kings who oppose the Son are crushed. In Daniel 7 and Psalm 2 there is blessing for those who follow the Son (Ps 2:12; Dn 7:18, 22, 27). Steinmann, 360; cf. Hamilton, 148–49. Steinmann, however, also notes a major difference between these two Psalms and Daniel 7: in Daniel “the Messiah is not pictured as ruling until after the beasts are shorn of their power, whereas in these two psalms, the Messiah’s reign begins the process of defeating the nations.” Steinmann, 360; cf. Tanner, 442–43. The harmonies and divergences of these passages point to the already-not yet nature of the kingdom. Psalms 2 and 110 include both the already (Ps 2:1–7; 110:1–4) and the not yet (Ps 2:6, 8–12; 110:5–7). Daniel 7:8–14, 20–27 is about the not yet, but some of its imagery can be applied to the enthronement of Christ after his resurrection and ascension (cf. Acts 1:9).

¹²⁰ Anthony R. Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, AOTC, ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015), 267. For a similar interpretation of Zechariah 9, see G. K. Beale, “The Millennium in Revelation 20:1–10: An Amillennial Perspective,” *CTR NS* 11/1 (Fall 2013): 61–62.

gathering against Christ in Jerusalem at the crucifixion (Ps 2; Acts 4:27).¹²¹ In confirmation of this reading, Petterson observes that “Matthew reports many of the apocalyptic signs as taking place at the crucifixion (Matt. 27:45, 51–55).”¹²² The pouring out of God’s Spirit leading to the repentance of the inhabitants of Jerusalem occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2:32–37).¹²³ Petterson also affirms that “the NT also connects the ‘day’ with Jesus’ return, when all the nations will mourn the one who was pierced (e.g., Rev. 1:7).”¹²⁴

Petterson contrasts his interpretation with a dispensational understanding of the passage, but a futurist interpretation of Zechariah 12 is not a dispensational innovation. Justin Martyr, in his First Apology, connects this passage with Christ “coming in glory,”¹²⁵ and Hippolytus also interpreted this passage as referring to the Second Coming.¹²⁶ Augustine appeals to John’s quotation of this passage (Jn 19:37) to establish that Christ will return bodily.¹²⁷ Thus the futurist interpretation of the passage has a long pedigree.¹²⁸

The strongest arguments for Petterson’s view include the fact that Acts 2 applies Joel’s eschatological gift of the Spirit to Pentecost and the fact that Zechariah 13:1 speaks of a fountain “opened” “on that day,” which could be taken to refer to the shedding of Christ’s blood on the cross.

But Petterson’s argument does not withstand scrutiny. While the event of Pentecost did involve a restoration of a remnant of Israel,¹²⁹ it was not an instance of the consummation events Zechariah predicted. Zechariah describes the whole land mourning as it had at the death of Josiah (12:11–14). In addition, Zechariah predicted the elimination of idolatry and false prophecy “on that day” (13:2–3). Furthermore, the destruction of the nations “on that day” (12:9) points not to the crucifixion but to the return in judgment as the time for these events.¹³⁰ In fact, the repeated use of the phrase “on that day” points to the eschatological timing of these events. Though the phrase can be used to indicate historical judgments, Eric and Carol Myers observe that after the exile, “‘on that day’ and similar phrases tend to have an eschatological character. They announce the final disaster and accompanying deliverance that will come to all the world in temporary existence but as the ultimate

¹²¹ Petterson, 268.

¹²² Petterson, 268.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Justin Martyr, “The First Apology,” in *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, The Fathers of the Church, ed. Hermigild Dressler, trans. Thomas B. Falls (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 89 (ch. 52).

¹²⁶ Alberto Ferreiro, ed. *The Twelve Prophets*, ACCS (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 273, citing “On the End of the World,” 40.

¹²⁷ Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John 11–27*, Fathers of the Church, ed. Thomas P. Halton, et al., trans. John W. Rettig (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 192 (21.3).

¹²⁸ Petterson’s view, however, is also not unprecedented. See Martin Luther, *Lectures on the Minor Prophets III*, Luther’s Works (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1973), 20:139–42; Poole, 2:1013.

¹²⁹ Alan J. Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke’s Account of God’s Unfolding Plan*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), 109–10.

¹³⁰ Petterson is correct to connect Zechariah 12 with Psalm 2. Psalm 2, however, deals with both the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom. The nations are judged at the consummation, not at the inauguration.

resolution to the world's problems."¹³¹ The allusion to Zechariah 12:10 thus also points the reader toward a reading of Revelation which focuses on the Second Coming of Christ.

Conclusion

The Apostle John begins the book of Revelation with a cluster of OT allusions which together focus on the coming of the Messiah in a Day of the Lord to judge the nations and to establish his kingdom on earth to be ruled by redeemed mankind. This focus within the prologue serves as a signpost to readers for how they should approach the remainder of the book. Though not every allusion, on its own, decisively points to a futurist reading, when they are considered together, the futurist orientation of the prologue is clear.

¹³¹ Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, AB (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1998), 316.