Unraveling the Truth: The Grand Deception

Small Group Study Guide

Table of Contents

How to Use This Study Guide 2
Suggested Format 2
A Pace for the Book 3
A Note on Counter-Arguments 3
Supplemental Resources 4
The Chapters 4
- Chapter 1: I Begin Questioning 4
- Chapter 2: Reorienting Key Terms 6
- Chapter 3: What School Am I In? 7
- Chapter 4: The Celestial Divine Council 8
- Chapter 5: The Mission 9
- Chapter 6: Nimrod and the Birth of False Religion 10
- Chapter 7: The Unfaithful Bride 12
- Chapter 8: The Prophecies of Daniel 13
- Chapter 9: The Corruption of the Guardians 14
- Chapter 10: The Synagogue of Satan 15
- Chapter 11: The Great Tribulation 16
- Chapter 12: Dating the Book of Revelation 17
- Chapter 13: Decoding the Book of Revelation 19
- Chapter 14: Decoding Revelation: The Dragon, the Beasts, and the Fall of Babylon 20
- Chapter 15: Decoding Revelation: The Wedding, the Binding, and the New Creation 21
- Chapter 16: Jesus Christ Triumphant Over All 22
- Chapter 17: The Rise of the Kingdom 23
- Chapter 18: The Rock That Crushed the Statue 25
- Chapter 19: Under New Management 26
- Chapter 20: The Anatomy of the Deception 27
- Chapter 21: The Invisible War 28
- Chapter 22: The Visible Machinery 29
- Chapter 23: The Restoration 31
- Chapter 24: Rebuilding the Village 32
- Chapter 25: Fulfilled Kingdom Theology 33
- Chapter 26: The Line in the Sand 34

Chapter 27: From the Tombs to the Throne....36
After the Last Chapter....37
For the Leader....37
What This Looks Like on Monday, or Any Given Day....39

How to Use This Study Guide

This guide is written to be used alongside *Unraveling the Truth: The Grand Deception* in a small group, a Sunday school class, a pastors' reading circle, or a household reading the book together. Each of the book's twenty-seven chapters has an entry here with five parts: a short summary, a list of key passages, three discussion questions, two action items, and a note for the leader.

The summary is for the leader's eyes before the meeting, not for reading aloud. The key passages are the Scriptures the chapter builds on; the group should have them open, in more than one translation where it can. The book quotes the New American Standard Bible (1995) and the World English Bible most often and names the translation when it quotes; the questions below follow that habit, and where they ask the group to compare renderings it is because the difference matters to the argument.

The discussion questions are deliberately open. Each one states the chapter's position in a sentence, then states the strongest counter-argument a thoughtful reader of another view would raise, and then asks a question the group must answer from the text. They are not written to lead anyone to the "right" answer. The Berean model is the standard: "they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11, WEB). The Bereans did not take Paul's word for it. They checked. This guide asks you to do the same with this book.

The action items take the discussion out of the meeting room and into the week. Some ask for reading, some for a chart, some for a conversation, and some for a plain act of obedience: a meal, a visit, a prayer. All of them are meant to move a reader from agreeing or disagreeing with a chapter to doing something with it.

The leader's note tells the leader where the pushback is likely to come and which passage the group must read for itself before deciding. It is not a script. A leader who has read the chapter and the key passages will not need one.

Suggested Format

Each meeting should run about 60 to 90 minutes. A structure that has worked:

Opening (5 minutes). Ask one member to summarize the chapter from memory in two or three sentences. Do not read the summary from this guide; what a reader remembers unprompted tells the leader what landed.

Accountability (5 to 10 minutes). Ask who completed last week's action items and what they found. Keep this brief and keep it honest. A group that skips this step will stop doing the action items within a month.

Discussion (40 to 60 minutes). Work through the three questions in order. The group does not need to reach consensus. The goal is to think truthfully about the material with the text open, not to arrive at a group position. Disagreement is healthy, and the best meetings are the ones where someone in the room pushes back and the group goes to the passage to settle it.

Action items (10 minutes). Read the two action items for the coming week and decide together who will do which. Where an action item asks for a chart or a written paragraph, ask members to bring it to the next meeting.

Closing (5 minutes). One person shares a single takeaway. Close with prayer.

A Pace for the Book

Twenty-seven chapters is a long road, and groups that try to take it in a single season tend to stall somewhere in Revelation. Three pacings have worked:

Three terms of nine. Chapters 1 to 9 (the questions, the vocabulary, the schools, the council, the mission, Nimrod, the unfaithful bride, Daniel, and the corruption of the guardians); Chapters 10 to 18 (the Synagogue of Satan, the Great Tribulation, the dating and decoding of Revelation, Christ triumphant, the rise of the kingdom, and the stone that struck the statue); Chapters 19 to 27 (new management, the anatomy of the deception, the invisible war and the visible machinery, the restoration, rebuilding the village, Fulfilled Kingdom Theology, the line in the sand, and the testimony).

Two terms with a break. Chapters 1 to 16 carry the historical and exegetical case to its close in "Jesus Christ Triumphant Over All"; Chapters 17 to 27 carry the consequences. A group that pauses between the two will come back to the second half with the first settled.

A shorter course of twelve. For a group that cannot commit to the whole book, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 20, 25, 26 and 27 give the spine of the argument. Readers should be told plainly that they are skipping chapters, and which ones, so that they do not mistake the spine for the whole.

Chapters 11, 13, 14, 15, 20 and 25 are the book's longest, and a group may want two meetings for each. The entries below are written so that the three questions can be split across two sessions where that is needed.

A Note on Counter-Arguments

Every discussion question states the strongest counter-argument to the chapter's position, and states it fairly, in the form a careful futurist, a historic premillennialist, an amillennialist, a partial preterist, or a thoughtful skeptic would give it. This is deliberate. If the evidence in this book is sound, it will survive the challenge in a room full of people who want to find the truth. If a position does not survive, the group will have gained something more valuable than agreement: clarity about where the text is firm and where it is not.

Some of the counter-arguments are ones the book raises against itself and answers in the chapter; the question will say so. Others are the standing objections of the other schools, several of which Appendix A and Appendix E take up at length. The leader should resist the temptation to answer a counter-argument for the group. Send them to the passage.

Two cautions for the leader. First, the book is sharp toward a deception and never toward the deceived, and the group should keep the same manners: the person across the table who holds a futurist view is a brother or sister, and most of them were handed that view by people who loved them. Second, several chapters touch things that have hurt people, among them faith healing, deliverance, and the question of unanswered prayer. The leader's notes flag those places. Go slowly there.

Supplemental Resources

The book carries six appendices, and the questions below point to them often:

Appendix A: Objections Examined. The questions every reader will ask, each answered in its own section with a cross-reference to the chapter that carries the full treatment. It opens with the resurrection, which the book acknowledges is the objection that cuts deepest, and includes the account of how the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness and the beast were first merged into one figure.

Appendix B: Glossary of Key Terms. The Greek and Hebrew terms the argument turns on, each with its standard translation, its actual range of meaning, and the chapter where it is used.

Appendix C: Key Timeline. The dates the argument depends on, from the Soleb inscription to the fall of Masada, kept in one place beside the chapters.

Appendix D: Revelation, History, and Covenant: A Cross-Reference. A table mapping each judgment element in Revelation to three evidence streams: the historical record in Josephus, Tacitus and Eusebius; the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 32; and the Exodus plague pattern. It is the companion to Chapters 11, 13 and 14.

Appendix E: The Seven Views Examined. What each of the seven major prophetic frameworks teaches, where the book's evidence meets its core claims, and how a reader can follow each argument from assertion to evidence. A group with members from different traditions should read it early.

Appendix F: The Joseph Hill Hermeneutic. The method behind every conclusion in the book, laid out so the reader can apply it without the author. Groups that finish the book often return to it.

A group will also want a concordance or an interlinear New Testament (several are free online), at least two translations in the room, and access to the primary sources the book quotes, most of which are available in older public translations: Josephus, Tacitus, Eusebius, the Apostolic Fathers, and the texts of Enoch. Where an action item names a page in a modern book, the chapter's own quotation will serve a group that does not own it.

The Chapters

Chapter 1: I Begin Questioning

Summary

The chapter tells how the author's reading changed when he placed himself among the people standing in front of Jesus. Four passages drove it: Matthew 16:28, Hebrews 9:26, Acts 2:17, and Matthew 10:23, with Matthew 24:30-31 adding a question of place, a sign "in" the sky that

Josephus and Tacitus recorded. It argues from Paul's letters that Matthew 24:14 was fulfilled in his generation, charts forty-seven time indicators counting down to AD 70, answers "no one knows the day or hour" with the window of "this generation," denies a change of subject at Matthew 24:36, and defends genea as "generation" from usage, Kittel, Origen, Hammond, and Terry.

Key passages: Matthew 16:28; Hebrews 9:26; Acts 2:17; Matthew 10:23; Matthew 24:34; 1 John 2:18

Discussion questions

1. The chapter reads Matthew 16:28 as a promise to living people in front of Jesus that some would see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, kept within their generation. The strongest counter-argument is that the promise was kept within days, at the Transfiguration, or at the resurrection and Pentecost, so the verse carries no date for the fall of Jerusalem and nothing in it requires AD 70. Read Matthew 16:28 beside Matthew 10:23 and Matthew 24:34, which the chapter places on the same chart. Does the Transfiguration reading account for all three sayings or only one, and what would each have meant to the men who heard it?

2. The chapter takes Hebrews 9:26, Christ manifested "at the consummation of the ages," as placing the end of the age in the first century, and sets the "second time" of Hebrews 9:28 inside that span. The strongest counter-argument is that 9:28 is the plainest statement of a future bodily appearing in the New Testament, that "the consummation of the ages" can name the opening of the final era rather than its close, and that the same writer still speaks of a Day "drawing near" rather than arrived (Hebrews 10:25). Read Hebrews 9:26 and 9:28, then 10:25 and 10:37, in one sitting. What does the writer expect his first readers to see, and how soon?

3. The chapter holds that Matthew 24:36, "of that day and hour no one knows," does not postpone the event but fixes an unknown moment inside a known window, "this generation" (24:34), and that no new subject begins at verse 36. The strongest counter-argument is that the opening words, peri de, are often said to mark a new subject, and that Matthew 24:30-31, with the Son of Man seen on the clouds and the elect gathered from the four winds, describes more than the fall of one city, so a reader may find two events here. Read Mark 13 straight through, then Matthew 24:30-31, 24:34, 24:36, and 24:48-51. Does the discourse break anywhere, and on what grounds in the text?

Action items

1. Read Matthew 24 and Mark 13 in one sitting, without notes or commentary. Before you begin, write down what you have always believed these chapters describe. Afterward, write who is being addressed, what they are told they will see, and where, if anywhere, you think the subject changes. Compare the two lists and bring the differences to the group.

2. Using a concordance, look up every New Testament occurrence of genea, beginning with the passages the chapter names: Matthew 11:16; 12:41; 12:42; 23:36; Luke 11:50-51, and the exceptions in Matthew 1:17; Acts 13:36; Ephesians 3:5; Colossians 1:26; Luke 16:8. Write one line per passage saying who is meant. Then compare Matthew 24:34 in three translations and note any that render the word as "race."

Leader's note: The pushback will come at Matthew 24:36 and Hebrews 9:28, the two verses most often quoted for a future return. Make sure the group reads Matthew 24:34 and 24:36 in

their place, with Mark 13:32 open beside them, before deciding whether the subject changes at verse 36.

Chapter 2: Reorienting Key Terms

Summary

The chapter argues that English renderings shaped by later expectations made regional first-century events read as global ones. Five Greek words follow: gē, "earth" or "land," often the people of the land (Revelation 1:7); aiōn, an age, not the planet (Matthew 24:3); oikoumenē, the inhabited Roman world (Luke 2:1; Revelation 3:10); kosmos, an ordered system (1 John 2:17); and parousia, a king's arrival in authority. It reads "coming on the clouds" as judgment language (Isaiah 19:1; Nahum 1:3; Psalm 104:3) applied by Jesus to the council (Matthew 26:64), cites 1 Enoch as witness, not authority, and closes on audience: the letters belong inside Israel's covenant story.

Key passages: Matthew 24:3; Hebrews 12:26-28; Revelation 1:7; Isaiah 19:1; Matthew 26:64; Jude 14-15

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that gē in prophetic passages, above all in Revelation, means the land of Israel and usually its people, so that "all the tribes of the gē will mourn" (Revelation 1:7) concerns Judea. The strongest counter-argument is that the planetary sense is common across the New Testament, that Revelation sets its scenes beside "every tongue and kindred, and people, and nation," and that Gentile readers in Asia Minor would not have heard "Judea" automatically; each occurrence must be decided by context, not by a rule. Read Revelation 1:7, 13:8, 16:1, 16:14, and 16:19, then Luke 21:23, in two translations. In each, what in the surrounding verses points to a planet, and what points to a people?

2. The chapter reads parousia as the arrival of a king's authority and "coming on the clouds" as judgment language, so that Christ "came" in AD 70 through the Roman armies as Yahweh came to Egypt through Assyria (Isaiah 19:1). The strongest counter-argument is that the Old Testament cloud passages describe God acting unseen, while Jesus tells the council "you will see the Son of Man" (Matthew 26:64); seeing suggests a visible person, and portents over a city are not the Son of Man Himself. Read Isaiah 19:1, Nahum 1:3, and Psalm 104:3, then Matthew 26:64 and Matthew 23:37-38. What did Egypt see when the LORD came on His cloud, and what did the council and the city see?

3. The chapter argues that every New Testament letter and warning was addressed to a specific covenant people facing a specific war, and that reading them as written to us personally collapses their meaning. The strongest counter-argument is that inspired Scripture speaks to every generation, that the chapter's own example of Jude 14-15 shows a prophecy applied centuries after it was spoken, and that the church has always read the prophets as reaching beyond their first hearers. Read Jude 4 and Jude 14-15, then Matthew 23:37-38 and Acts 7:52. To whom was each warning addressed, and what rule would you use to decide which parts of a letter written to them also instruct or comfort us?

Action items

1. Pick one of the five Greek words examined in this chapter (gē, aiōn, oikoumenē, kosmos, parousia). Using a concordance or an online tool, list every occurrence of that word in one New Testament book, Revelation for gē or Matthew for aiōn, and mark each place where

"land," "age," "inhabited world," "system," or "presence" would read as well as or better than your English Bible's rendering. Count them.

2. Compare Matthew 24:3 in the King James Version and in the NASB, ESV, or NIV, and write down the difference in one sentence. Then read Isaiah 19:1, Nahum 1:3, and Psalm 104:3 in one sitting and note what each "coming" turned out to be in history. Bring one sentence on whether that pattern should govern how you read Matthew 26:64.

Leader's note: Expect pushback on "coming on the clouds" and on the claim that the letters were not written to us. Make sure the group reads Isaiah 19:1 and Matthew 26:64 side by side for itself before deciding whether the council "saw" the Son of Man come.

Chapter 3: What School Am I In?

Summary

The chapter surveys eight schools, dispensationalism, historicism, idealism, historic premillennialism, amillennialism, postmillennialism, partial preterism, and full preterism, with the companion doctrine of cessationism, giving each its origin and reach. It states the creedal objection in the creeds' own words and asks whether the fathers had all the facts, naming what they lacked: the Jewish setting after Pella, the Qumran reading of Deuteronomy 32:8, the Revelation papyri, and agreement on Revelation's date and the thousand years. It closes with the author's position, Fulfilled Kingdom Theology: every prophecy of the end of the age fulfilled by AD 70, the kingdom present and increasing, the gifts still operating, the Ephesians 6:12 war real.

Key passages: Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Deuteronomy 32:8; Acts 17:11; Ephesians 6:12; Isaiah 9:7

Discussion questions

1. The chapter treats the creeds as faithful but dated documents, framed by a fourth-century Gentile church without facts now available, noting that "I look for the resurrection of the dead" entered the Nicene Creed in AD 381, not 325. The strongest counter-argument is that the creeds summarize what the church received through men one step from the apostles, that the creed of 325 confessed Christ "coming to judge the living and the dead," and that a reading no church confessed in sixteen centuries bears the burden of proof. Read Acts 17:11, then the 325 and 381 wordings the chapter quotes. What changed, and what weight should a Protestant who holds that no council stands above the text give to it?

2. The chapter holds that the gifts of the Spirit never ceased, which separates Fulfilled Kingdom Theology from the cessationism of most full preterists and from Warfield's. The strongest counter-argument is that Hebrews 2:3-4 ties signs to confirming the apostolic message, that 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 says prophecy and tongues will pass away "when the perfect comes," and that Luther and Calvin, in Keener's record, held apostolic miracles had ceased while still praying for healing, so a cessationist need not deny that God heals. Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 and Hebrews 2:3-4 in context. What is "the perfect," does either text set a date, and how should a group weigh testimony like the author's sixty events against its reading of these texts?

3. The chapter says Fulfilled Kingdom Theology is neither full preterism, since the power was never withdrawn, nor partial preterism, which defers what Jesus placed in His generation; no school holds its three convictions together. The strongest counter-argument is that a position no school has held in two thousand years is suspect on its face,

that Gary DeMar's refusal in 2023 to answer yes or no on a future bodily return shows the slide from partial to full preterism, and that a fulfillment claim shared with full preterism inherits its creedal problem. Take the three convictions as stated. Which could a partial preterist adopt without leaving his school, which could a full preterist, and where does the real line fall?

Action items

1. Write down which school on the chapter's list you were taught or absorbed, and three of its core beliefs. Then have a conversation this week with someone who belongs to a different school. Ask one question only, "What is the single strongest piece of evidence for your view?", and listen without rebutting. Record their answer in one sentence and bring it to the group.

2. Read Augustine, City of God 22.8, and Eusebius, Church History 3.39.12-13, the two passages the chapter cites on the miracles recorded at Hippo and on Papias and the thousand years. Write one sentence on each, stating in the father's own words what he reports, and one sentence on whether the fathers spoke with one voice on either question.

Leader's note: The sharpest pushback will be the creedal boundary, since a future return and resurrection have been confessed aloud for sixteen centuries. Make sure the group reads the chapter's quoted wording of the 325 and 381 creeds, and Acts 17:11, for itself before weighing whether a dated confession settles the question.

Chapter 4: The Celestial Divine Council

Summary

The chapter argues that Scripture describes a real heavenly council whose members were allotted the nations at Babel. It traces the name Yahweh through inscriptions from Soleb to Lachish, sets out Ugarit's El and his seventy sons, rejects equating Ugaritic Yaw with Yahweh, and restores Deuteronomy 32:8 from the Qumran fragment 4QDeut-j, "sons of God," against the Masoretic "sons of Israel," a change Tov judges deliberate. Daniel 10 shows the allotment at work; Psalm 82 records indictment and sentence; Isaiah 24:21-23 orders its execution. The Smith-Heiser dispute over Yahweh's rank is reported, not settled. Jesus, the only obedient Son, reclaimed the nations; Ephesians 6:12 names a different structure still operating.

Key passages: Psalm 82:1; Deuteronomy 32:8; Deuteronomy 32:9; Daniel 10:13; John 10:34-36; Colossians 2:15

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that Deuteronomy 32:8 originally read "sons of God," that the Masoretic "sons of Israel" is a scribe's deliberate change, and that the verse means the nations were handed to spiritual beings to govern. The strongest counter-argument is that the Masoretic text has been the received Hebrew of synagogue and church for over a thousand years, that one Qumran fragment and a Greek rendering should not overturn it lightly, and that a number fixed by the council does not by itself say the council governed, which the chapter reads together with 4:19. Read Deuteronomy 32:8-9 in the NASB, NRSV, NET, and WEB, then 4:19-20 and 29:26. Does Deuteronomy itself, apart from Ugarit, say the nations were given gods?

2. The chapter reads the "gods" of Psalm 82 as members of the heavenly council, not human judges, and holds that Jesus' use of Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34-36 gains force on that

reading. The strongest counter-argument is the rabbinic one: elohim names the court in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8-9, the Mishnah renders 82:1 "among the judges," the charges of 82:2-4, defending the poor and the fatherless, are a magistrate's duties, and Jesus' phrase "to whom the word of God came" fits men who received the Law. Read Psalm 82 whole, then Exodus 21:6 and 22:8-9, then John 10:34-36. Which reading best explains "you shall die like men," and which best explains the argument Jesus makes from the psalm?

3. The chapter holds that Isaiah's "there is no God besides Me" denies rivals, not the existence of other elohim, that the Shema is a loyalty oath, and that the bene elohim are created subordinates. The strongest counter-argument is that Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, and 45:5, with Deuteronomy 32:39, read as plain denials that other deities exist, that calling angels "gods" blurs a line the prophets fought to keep, and that Paul says an idol is nothing (1 Corinthians 8:4). Read Isaiah 46:1-2 and 46:10 beside 45:5, then 1 Corinthians 8:4 and 8:5-6. What is each writer denying, what is each granting, and does "many gods and many lords" describe real beings or only what the nations believed?

Action items

1. Read Deuteronomy 32:8-9 in at least three translations, including one of the NRSV, NLT, or NET that the chapter names, and note whether each reads "sons of God," "sons of Israel," "heavenly court," or "heavenly assembly." Then read Job 1:6, Job 38:7, Psalm 29:1, and Psalm 89:6-7 and write one sentence on what bene elohim refers to in each.

2. Read Josephus, Antiquities 1.3.1, the passage the chapter gives on Genesis 6, then Genesis 6:1-4 and Jude 6 in one sitting. Make a two-column chart: what Josephus says the tradition held, and what Genesis and Jude say in their own words. Mark where the columns agree and where Josephus goes beyond the text. Bring the chart to the group.

Leader's note: The group will most likely resist the idea of real "gods" at all, and the strongest objection in the room will be Isaiah 45:5. Make sure the group reads Psalm 82 whole and Deuteronomy 32:8-9 in both readings before deciding which text is older and what the verse means.

Chapter 5: The Mission

Summary

The chapter takes 1 John 3:8, "to destroy the works of the devil," as the purpose of the incarnation and inventories twelve past-tense components: the Jubilee (Luke 4:18-19), all authority (Matthew 28:18), the strong man bound (Matthew 12:29), the dead made alive, the debt canceled, the rulers disarmed (Colossians 2:13, 2:14, 2:15), death abolished (Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 2:14-15), the wall broken (Ephesians 2:14-16), captivity led captive (Ephesians 4:8-10), the curse absorbed (Galatians 3:13-14), and the Spirit poured out (Acts 2:33). It reads Eden as a coup, answers why Satan is active after his binding, and ends with Isaiah's new heavens and new earth as a covenant transition.

Key passages: 1 John 3:8; Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 28:18; Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 4:8-10; Revelation 20:3

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that all twelve components are described as accomplished, and its phrase is "already/already" rather than the seminary phrase "already and not yet." The strongest counter-argument is that believers still die, sin, and suffer; that many scholars

read 1 Corinthians 15:26 as placing death's destruction ahead rather than behind us; and that Hebrews 2:14-15 says the devil was "rendered powerless," not removed, so the New Testament holds a present victory and a future completion together. Go down the twelve components with their passages open. Which are described in the text as finished, which depend on a framework brought to the text, and does the aorist of Colossians 2:13 decide the question for the others?

2. The chapter holds that Satan was bound at the cross for one stated purpose, "that he should deceive the nations no more" (Revelation 20:3), and that his later activity is a prisoner's on a short chain, striking at believers and covenant institutions. The strongest counter-argument is that the texts the chapter gathers describe deception and blinding (2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 John 5:19), hard to separate from deceiving nations, and that Revelation 20:1-3 pictures a sealed pit, not a chain with reach. Read Matthew 12:29 and Revelation 20:1-3, then Acts 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 1 Peter 5:8; and 1 John 5:19. For each, is the target a believer, a covenant institution, or a nation? Does the sorting hold?

3. The chapter holds that Colossians 2:15 records the disarming of the rulers at the cross, while Ephesians 6:12 names a different, still-operating hierarchy whose authority has been revoked. The strongest counter-argument is that Paul uses the same vocabulary of rulers and authorities in both letters, written close in time, so the natural reading is one set of powers, disarmed yet still fighting, which is the ordinary "already and not yet" and needs no second hierarchy; the distinction is the book's construction, not a statement of either verse. Read Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 1:20-21, and Ephesians 6:12 with an interlinear. Are the same terms used, and what in each context tells you whether Paul means the same beings?

Action items

1. Using the twelve-component chart, read each supporting passage in its full context, not only the verse cited, in one sitting. For each, write a single sentence answering: "What did this accomplish, and is it described as completed or pending?" Mark the tense of the main verb as the translation gives it. Bring your twelve sentences to the group.

2. Read Josephus, Jewish War 5.194, on the inscriptions of the Temple barrier, and Antiquities 18.1.3, on what the Pharisees taught about the dead, as the chapter cites them. Then read Ephesians 2:14-16 and Ephesians 4:8-10 in one sitting and write two short paragraphs on what the soreg wall and the picture of Sheol add to Paul's words.

Leader's note: Expect the room to divide over "already/already" against "already and not yet," and over a Satan who is bound yet active. Make sure the group reads Colossians 2:13, 14, and 15 as the single sentence the chapter says it is in Greek, and the purpose clause of Revelation 20:3, before deciding. ## Chapter 6: Nimrod and the Birth of False Religion

Chapter 6: Nimrod and the Birth of False Religion

Summary

The chapter traces false religion to Nimrod, founder of the first kingdom after the flood (Genesis 10:8-12), whom Josephus, Philo, the Targum, and Augustine read as a rebel, and reads the tower of Genesis 11 as a ziggurat, the first pagan temple. The scattering leads to Deuteronomy 32:8 and the allotment of the nations. It documents the goddess and her dying consort from Inanna's Descent, the Enuma Elish, Herodotus, Ezekiel 8:14, and Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:17-19, sets Hislop

aside, presents the Carthage Tophet, follows one word, shiqquts, from Ashtoreth to the Harlot's cup, and compares the outcome of Darby's framework, not the man, to Babel's pattern.

Key passages: Genesis 10:8-9; Genesis 11:4; Deuteronomy 32:8; Ezekiel 8:14; Jeremiah 7:18; Revelation 17:5

Discussion questions

1. The chapter reads the tower of Babel as a religious project, a ziggurat to reach the host of heaven and the first pagan temple, with Nimrod its organizer on the word of Josephus, the Targum, and Augustine. The strongest counter-argument is that Genesis 11 never names Nimrod or mentions a god or a temple, and gives the builders' own motives as fame and a refusal to scatter; Diodorus describes the Babylon of the kings centuries later, and reading Bel's temple back into Shinar goes beyond what Moses wrote. Read Genesis 10:8-12, 11:1-9, and 9:1. What does the text itself say the builders wanted, and does the ziggurat reading draw that out or add to it?

2. The chapter holds that the goddess and her dying consort form one system, carried from Shinar to every nation, so that Revelation 17:5 names Babylon "the mother of harlots," the source of all false worship. The strongest counter-argument is that the dying-god parallels were overstated by Hislop and his heirs, whom the chapter sets aside; that each cult had features that resist harmonizing; and that the chapter concedes "the texts do not say" how far the dispersion carried the pattern. Read Ezekiel 8:14, 8:16, and 8:17, Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:17-19, then Revelation 17:4 and 17:5. What does Scripture itself connect to Babylon, and how much of the chain rests on history rather than text?

3. The chapter holds that the Harlot of Revelation 17 is Jerusalem, "where also their Lord was crucified" (Revelation 11:8), and that the word in her cup, bdelygma, is the word Kings used of Ashtoreth, Daniel of the abomination, and Jesus in Matthew 24:15. The strongest counter-argument is that most readers across the centuries have taken Revelation's Babylon as Rome, that the chapter defers its demonstration to a later chapter, and that the Greek Bible uses bdelygma of idolatry everywhere, so a shared word cannot fix one city. Read 2 Kings 23:13, Jeremiah 44:4, Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, and Revelation 17:4 and 17:5. Does the word trail point to one city, and what else would the group need?

Action items

1. Read Ezekiel 8 and Jeremiah 44 in one sitting. For each practice named, write who is doing it and where. Then look up the Hebrew shiqquts in a concordance at 2 Kings 23:13, Daniel 9:27, and Daniel 11:31, and the Greek bdelygma at Matthew 24:15, Revelation 17:4, and Revelation 17:5, and note whether your translation uses one English word for all of them.

2. Read Josephus, Antiquities 1.4.2, and Augustine, City of God 16.4, the passages the chapter gives on Nimrod, then Genesis 10:8-12 in two translations, one of them rendering "before the LORD." Make a two-column chart: what Genesis says in its own words, and what the tradition adds. Bring one sentence on whether the additions change how you read the verse.

Leader's note: The pushback will come at Nimrod the rebel, since Genesis calls him a mighty hunter "before the LORD," and at the claim that the Harlot is Jerusalem. Make sure the group reads Genesis 10:8-12 and 11:1-9, then Revelation 17:5, 17:7, and 17:8-18, for itself before deciding what the text says and what the tradition supplies.

Chapter 7: The Unfaithful Bride

Summary

The chapter reads Israel's history as a covenant lawsuit. Commissioned as a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6), the nation played the harlot, the verb zanah running from Exodus 34:16 through Judges to Hosea and Ezekiel 16. It files three charges, harlotry, the Baals, and the mocked messengers, names four kinds of breach, and matches Deuteronomy 28's curses to Josephus clause by clause. God issues a writ of divorce (Jeremiah 3:8); the new marriage is lawful because a death dissolved the bond (Romans 7:2, 4). Daniel's seventy weeks run from Ezra's decree in 457 BC to AD 27 and the cross in AD 30, with no gap.

Key passages: Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 28:53-57; 2 Chronicles 36:15-16; Jeremiah 3:8; Romans 7:2; Daniel 9:24

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that God lawfully divorced Israel (Jeremiah 3:8), that Deuteronomy 24:4 forbade taking her back, and that the new bride was married lawfully because the bond to the law died at the cross (Romans 7:2, 4). The strongest counter-argument is that Romans 7 concerns the believer and the law, not God divorcing a nation; that Hosea 2:19, which the chapter quotes, betroths the very wife being put away, so the same bride is restored; and that a covenant resting on God's oath cannot be ended by the other party's failure. Read Deuteronomy 24:4, Jeremiah 3:1 and 3:8, Hosea 2:19, and Romans 7:2 and 7:4. Who died, and is the bride restored or newly wed?

2. The chapter reads Daniel's seventy weeks as 490 continuous years from Artaxerxes' decree to Ezra in 457 BC, reaching the Messiah in AD 27 and the cross in AD 30. The strongest counter-argument is that Anderson and Hoehner reach AD 33 from Nehemiah's decree in 444 BC, that the "he" of Daniel 9:27 can be the prince whose people destroy the city, that Irenaeus and Hippolytus detached the last week long before Darby, and that the chapter concedes its Luke 3:1 date is a choice. Read Daniel 9 in two translations, then Ezra 7:7-28 and Nehemiah 2:1-17. Which decree "restores" the city, who is the "he" of verse 27, and where does the text put the cross?

3. The chapter holds that the curses of Deuteronomy 28:15-68 were carried out at AD 70, that Josephus records them clause after clause, and that Revelation's judgments are the same curses applied to the generation that rejected the Messiah. The strongest counter-argument is that Deuteronomy 28 had already run its course in 587 BC, as Daniel's prayer confesses (Daniel 9:11-13); that Jeremiah's generation saw those sentences carried out, as the chapter says; and that if the first covenant was "becoming obsolete" after the cross (Hebrews 8:13), its sanctions could not fall again. Read Deuteronomy 28:15-68, then Daniel 9:11-13 and Hebrews 8:13. Did the curses run once or twice, and what decides whether the covenant still stood in AD 70?

Action items

1. Read Daniel 9 whole in one sitting, then Ezra 7:7-28 and Nehemiah 2:1-17. On paper, count 483 years forward from 457 BC and from 444 BC, remembering there is no year zero, and write where each count lands. Then write one sentence on which decree fits Daniel's word "restore," and bring both calculations to the group.

2. Read Deuteronomy 28:15-68, then Josephus, Wars 6.3.4, 6.8.2, 6.9.2, and 6.9.3, the passages the chapter cites. Make a two-column chart, clause and record, and beside each

pair write “fulfilled” or “corresponds” by your own judgment, the two words the chapter itself keeps apart. Note which clause, if any, you would call fulfilled to the letter.

Leader’s note: Expect the sharpest pushback on God issuing a divorce, and on the arithmetic of the seventy weeks, since many in the room will know the 444 BC reckoning. Make sure the group reads Daniel 9:24 through verse 27, and Romans 7:2 and 7:4, for itself, with Hosea 2:19 open, before deciding.

Chapter 8: The Prophecies of Daniel

Summary

The chapter identifies Daniel’s fourth kingdom as the Hellenistic successor states of the Diadochi, the Seleucid house the line of the little horn, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and names Porphyry the oldest holder of the division between Alexander’s leopard and his successors’ beast. It gives five problems with the Roman reading, answers Newton’s three objections, lists ten Seleucid horns, and reads Daniel 7:12 as the text’s own interval. Daniel 11 is traced to Antiochus and, as the book’s own reading, to Herod. It shows Josephus leaving the fourth kingdom unnamed, cites Ephrem, Polychronius, and Cosmas excluding Rome, and reads Matthew 24:15 as the Antiochus pattern repeated in AD 70.

Key passages: Daniel 2:43; Daniel 7:7; Daniel 7:12; Daniel 8:21; Daniel 11:31; Matthew 24:15-16

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the fourth beast is the Diadochi, the kingdoms out of Greece (Daniel 8:22), and the little horn Antiochus IV, as Porphyry first read it. The strongest counter-argument is Newton’s: the iron “breaks in pieces and subdues all things,” yet the successors were weaker; the third kingdom already divides into four in Daniel 8:8, so a fourth made of the same Greeks splits one kingdom in two; and the kingdom set up “in the days of those kings” (Daniel 2:44) came in Rome’s day. Read Daniel 2:39-40, 2:41-43, and 2:44, then 8:20 and 8:21-22. Are Alexander’s kingdom and his successors’ one kingdom or two, and what does “in the days of those kings” require?

2. The chapter holds that Daniel 7 runs from the judgment of Antiochus to the enthronement of Christ with the text’s own interval at 7:12, the kingdoms’ prolonged life, which is not the gap the book rejects. The strongest counter-argument is that two centuries between verse 11 and verse 13 is a gap by another name, and that the court and the Son of Man read as one sitting, so the beast destroyed there should be the beast ruling when He came. Read Daniel 7:9, 7:11, 7:12, 7:13-14, and 7:26. Does the text state the interval or the reader supply it, and how does it differ from the gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks?

3. The chapter reads Daniel 11:36-45 of Herod the Great, as a position it owns: the rumors from the east as the Magi, the end at Jericho between the sea and the holy mountain. The strongest counter-argument is that Porphyry read these verses of Antiochus, the king of the North being the Seleucid throughout the chapter with nothing marking a new subject at verse 36; that the chapter grants no earlier reader took them of Herod; and that futurists see the same break and read it forward. Read Daniel 11, verses 21 through 45, with the chapter’s identifications beside it. Where does the subject change, if it changes, and what marks it?

Action items

1. Read Daniel 2, 7, and 8 in one sitting. Make a two-column chart of the four kingdoms, the Roman identification beside the Hellenistic one, and for each row write the verse that supports each side. Add a line for Newton's three objections, strength, toes, and metal, and beside each write the verse the chapter answers it with. Bring the chart.

2. Read 1 Maccabees 1:41-50, 1:54, 1:56-57, and 1:60-61, then 2 Maccabees 7, and Josephus, Antiquities 10.10.4, as the chapter cites them. Write one line per passage on what Antiochus did, and one sentence on whether Josephus names the fourth kingdom. Then read Matthew 24:15-16, Mark 13:14, and Luke 21:20 side by side and note what each says stands where.

Leader's note: The whole room will have been taught Rome, so expect the pushback to be the consensus itself and "in the days of those kings." Make sure the group reads Daniel 8:20 and 8:21-22, then 7:9 through 7:14, for itself, with the interpreter's words in 8:21-22 underlined, before weighing either identification.

Chapter 9: The Corruption of the Guardians

Summary

The chapter covers Israel from exile to AD 70 and argues that the four centuries between Malachi and Matthew produced every faction and corruption Jesus confronted. The exile was a covenant sentence counted by the land's Sabbaths (2 Chronicles 36:21); the Second Temple stood without the glory, which left in Ezekiel 10 and 11 and never returned, housing the Name while God sat on His throne (Matthew 23:22). It reads Yoma 39b's four signs over forty years, Leviticus 16:8's Azazel as a named rebel, the silence as staging (Galatians 4:4), the sale of the priesthood, the Hasmonean merger of crown and altar, Jannaeus's crucifixions, Herod, and the house of Annas.

Key passages: 2 Chronicles 36:21; Ezekiel 10:18-19; Malachi 1:7; Leviticus 16:8; Galatians 4:4; Matthew 21:13

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the glory never returned to the Second Temple, that only the Name dwelt there (Deuteronomy 12:11), and that Jesus called it "my Father's house" because its Owner sat on His throne in heaven (Matthew 23:21 and 23:22). The strongest counter-argument is that Jesus speaks of "him who has been living in it" in the present tense, that Josephus says the breastplate's stones shone until a century before Christ, and that Yoma 21b is a memory written down centuries later. Read Ezekiel 10:18-19 and 11:22-23, 1 Kings 8:10-11, Deuteronomy 12:11, Matthew 23:21 and 23:22, and John 1:14. What dwelt in the second house, and does "living in it" mean more than the Name?

2. The chapter holds that Leviticus 16:8 names a celestial rebel, Azazel, that the goat served a sentence on him, and that the lot stopped falling to the right hand after AD 30 because the Lamb had carried the sins. The strongest counter-argument is that "Azazel" has been read as a place or as the goat itself; that 1 Enoch is not Scripture and should not fix a canonical rite's meaning; and that Yoma 39b is a rabbinic memory never tied by the rabbis to Jesus. Read Leviticus 16:8 and 16:21-22 in three translations, then Isaiah 1:18 and Yoma 39b as quoted. What does the Hebrew parallel require, and what weight can a rabbinic memory carry?

3. The chapter holds that the guardians' corruption was systemic, from the Hasmonean merger of priest and king to the house of Annas, so that "your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:38) was a verdict the institution had earned. The strongest

counter-argument is that the Maccabean revolt was a real renewal, that Jesus kept the feast it founded (John 10:22-23), that God spoke even through Caiaphas (John 11:50), and that a corrupt leadership does not make the destruction of God's own house a covenant sentence rather than a tragedy. Read 1 Maccabees 14:41-47, John 10:22-23, John 11:50, Matthew 21:13, and Matthew 23:38. When did "my Father's house" become "your house," and who makes that call?

Action items

1. Make a timeline of the high priests from Onias III to Caiaphas, using 2 Maccabees 4:7-38, Josephus, Antiquities 15.3.3, 20.8.8, and 20.9.2, and Pesachim 57a as the chapter cites them. Beside each name write how he came to office: succession, appointment, or purchase. Bring the timeline and one sentence on what it shows about the office Jesus faced.

2. Read Ezekiel 10 and 11 in one sitting and mark each movement of the glory (10:18-19; 11:22-23). Then read 1 Kings 8:10-11 and Ezra 3:12 and write whether any verse you can find brings the glory back to Zerubbabel's house. Finish with John 1:14 and Matthew 23:38 and write one sentence on where the chapter says the glory went.

Leader's note: The pushback will come at Azazel as a real being and at the use of Yoma 39b for a Christian conclusion. Make sure the group reads Leviticus 16:8 and 16:21-22 in the Hebrew's own parallel, and the Yoma 39b text as quoted, before deciding what the lot stood for.

Chapter 10: The Synagogue of Satan

Summary

The chapter follows one thread to its end: the murder of Onias III (2 Maccabees 4), the factions, Josephus's Fourth Philosophy and the dynasty of Hezekiah on Hengel's reconstruction, and Jesus' indictment, "your father the devil" (John 8:44) and "synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9; 3:9), with a plain warning against turning either phrase on the Jewish people. Matthew 23 is read as a covenant lawsuit, Acts 2:40 as Moses' "crooked generation," and Revelation's judgments as Deuteronomy 28's curses. The Tyrian shekel, bearing Melqart's face and the Temple's only accepted coin, is set beside Exodus 20:4 and Ezekiel 28's trade, through the Bazaars of Annas to the thirty pieces of silver.

Key passages: John 8:44; Revelation 2:9; Matthew 23:37-38; Acts 2:40; Exodus 20:4; Ezekiel 28:16

Discussion questions

1. The chapter reads Matthew 23 as a formal covenant lawsuit, seven woes and a sentence, "all these things will come upon this generation," executed on the people in front of Jesus within forty years. The strongest counter-argument is that the prophets spoke in hyperbole and the woes are a lament, not a courtroom; that "this generation" has been read of the unbelieving kind in every age; that "how often I wanted to gather your children" shows a door still open; and that Peter went on preaching to the same men. Read Matthew 23, then Matthew 21:41, Acts 2:23, and Acts 2:40. Is "this generation" a date or a type, and does Peter's "crooked generation" settle it?

2. The chapter holds that the Tyrian shekel, with Melqart-Baal's face, was the only coin the Temple accepted, that this broke the first two commandments, and, as the book's own reading, that the coin is the mark of the beast. The strongest counter-argument is that the

shekel was the purest silver available, that the Mishnah's rule that a coin is money is a reasonable judgment, that no word against the coin is recorded when the collectors asked Peter about the tax (Matthew 17:24), and that the chapter grants the coin is archaeology while its meaning is inference. Read Exodus 20:3 and 20:4, Matthew 17:24, 21:13, 26:15, and 27:6. What did Jesus condemn: coin, commerce, or men?

3. The chapter holds that "synagogue of Satan" is Jesus' own critique of one generation's institution, that it indicts no race, and that the Protocols show what a prophecy torn from its century can do. The strongest counter-argument is that the chapter's own sentences, "the murder of the Son of God by the people of God," are collective; that readers across history have not kept the distinction the chapter draws; and that so dangerous a phrase is better retired than explained. Read Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, John 8:44, Acts 2:23, and Acts 2:40, and ask of each who is addressed and what the text limits the charge to. Then write down together the safeguards a reader should bring.

Action items

1. Read Matthew 23 and Deuteronomy 28 side by side, then the pairs the chapter draws: Deuteronomy 28:21-22 with Revelation 6:1-8, 28:23 with 6:12, 28:52 with 11:2, and 28:53-57 with Josephus's siege. Make a three-column chart, curse, answering passage, and your own verdict on whether the match is specific or general. Bring the chart.

2. Read Ezekiel 27 and 28 in one sitting, then Revelation 18:11-19. Look up the Hebrew word for trade, rekullah, in a concordance at Ezekiel 28:5, 16, and 18, and write one sentence on what the oracle says brought the king of Tyre down. Then write a second sentence on whether the courts of Matthew 21:13 fit that pattern, and why.

Leader's note: Expect pushback at calling the shekel the mark of the beast and at the force of "synagogue of Satan" and "your father the devil." Make sure the group reads Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 in their letters, and Matthew 23:37-38, for itself before deciding whom the words were spoken to.

Chapter 11: The Great Tribulation

Summary

The chapter sets Josephus's eyewitness record, Tacitus corroborating and Eusebius carrying it, beside the Olivet Discourse and gives its answer first: in AD 70 the Lord came as the Father had come on Egypt and Jerusalem, through an army, on a date (Isaiah 19:1; Jeremiah 25:9; Matthew 22:7). It follows the three factions, the famine, Mary of Bethezuba and Deuteronomy 28:53, the Temple burned on the first house's date, Cestius's withdrawal and the flight to Pella, the signs of Wars 6.5.3 and Histories 5.13, the dead as Newton counted them, Matthew 24:29-31 on three levels, and John of Gischala named, as the book's own inference, as Paul's man of lawlessness.

Key passages: Matthew 24:21; Matthew 22:7; Luke 21:20-21; Luke 21:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Matthew 24:30-31

Discussion questions

1. The chapter reads "a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matthew 24:21) as a covenantal statement: the last judgment on a covenant people, after which no covenant remained to violate. The strongest counter-argument is that "nor ever will" sounds like a claim about all history; that the chapter records Hadrian's war with 580,000 dead; that Daniel 12:1, which Jesus

echoes, has long been read of a distress still future; and that cosmic signs no one saw are hard to call unequaled. Read Matthew 24:21 and 24:22, Daniel 12:1, and Josephus, Wars 6.9.3 and 6.9.4. By what measure is it unequaled, and who supplies the measure?

2. The chapter holds that the Lord came in AD 70, that the armies seen in the clouds (Wars 6.5.3; Histories 5.13) correspond to the sign of Matthew 24:30, and that no coming of this kind is still owed. The strongest counter-argument is that the chapter admits neither witness mentions the Son of Man; that Jesus told the council "you will see the Son of Man" (Matthew 26:64); that Acts 1:11 still stands; and that Chrysostom, reading the tribulation of Vespasian's day, took verse 30 of a future coming. Read Matthew 24:29-31 with Isaiah 19:1 and Daniel 7:13-14, then the two historians as quoted. What do the witnesses say they saw, and does the text require a seen figure?

3. The chapter identifies the man of lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, as its own inference, with John of Gischala, and the restrainer with Ananus, whose murder let John in. The strongest counter-argument is that Paul's man "sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself up as God," and no source has John claiming deity; that Tertullian and the oldest readers took the restrainer to be Rome; and that the portrait is Josephus's, John's mortal enemy. Read 2 Thessalonians 2 whole, then Josephus, Wars 4.3.8, 4.3.12-14, 4.5.2, and 5.13.6. Which of Paul's marks are met by acts on record, which by inference, and does "setting himself up as God" need a claim or only an act?

Action items

1. Read Josephus, Wars 6.5.3-4, and Tacitus, Histories 5.13, in full, as the chapter cites them, then Matthew 24:29-31 and Luke 21:11 and 21:25. Make a chart with three columns: the sign reported, which historian reports it, and what Jesus said. In a fourth column mark where the witness's own words stop and the reading begins. Bring it to the group.

2. Read Luke 19:42-44 and Luke 21:20-24 in one sitting, with an interlinear open, and note whether the "you" in each is singular or plural. Then read Eusebius, Church History 3.5.3, and Epiphanius, Panarion 29.7.7-8, as the chapter quotes them, and write what each historian actually says about who left Jerusalem and when, set beside Adam Clarke's "not one of them perished."

Leader's note: The pushback will come at Matthew 24:29-31 and the claim that no coming of this kind is still owed, and at naming John of Gischala. Make sure the group reads Josephus, Wars 6.5.3, and Tacitus, Histories 5.13, in the witnesses' own words beside Matthew 24:30 before deciding what was seen and what is read into it. ## Chapter 12: Dating the Book of Revelation

Chapter 12: Dating the Book of Revelation

Summary

The chapter argues that Revelation was written about AD 65, under Nero, with the Temple standing. It states the AD 95 case, Irenaeus (Against Heresies 5.30.3), emperor worship, church maturity, the Laodicea earthquake, Domitianic persecution, and answers each: Irenaeus's "was seen" has no expressed subject and carries a tradition; the cult at Pergamum dates to 29 BC; Paul's churches fractured within years; Tacitus (Annals 14.27) has Laodicea rebuild on its own resources; Domitian's persecution is barely in the record. For the early date it offers the Syriac superscription, the Muratorian Fragment, the standing Temple (11:1-2), the sixth king (17:10), and tachu, then the canon's order, 1 Enoch, and the countdown.

Key passages: Revelation 11:1-2; Revelation 17:9-10; Revelation 1:1; Revelation 22:6; Hebrews 8:13; 1 John 2:18

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that Irenaeus's "was seen" (Against Heresies 5.30.3) has no expressed subject, can be read of the vision, of John, or of the beast's name, and is a handed-down tradition, like the elders' report that Jesus lived into His fifties (2.22.5). The strongest counter-argument is that Irenaeus learned from Polycarp, who knew John; that Eusebius appeals to "the story" of the ancients, not to Irenaeus alone (Church History 3.18.1; 3.20.9); and that the Syriac superscription naming Nero is itself a later tradition. Read the Irenaeus sentence as the chapter quotes it, then Hammond's point on the Latin visum. Can the subject be decided from the sentence, and if not, what should carry the weight?

2. The chapter holds that the text dates itself: John measures a Temple whose outer court is "given to the nations" for forty-two months (11:1-2), and the sixth king who "is" (17:10), counted from Julius Caesar, is Nero. The strongest counter-argument is Koester's and Friesen's: the measuring scene can be an image of the church, as Ezekiel measured a temple that did not exist; John "was paying more attention to Scripture than to events"; and the king who "is" "will not help us deduce the date." Read Revelation 11:1-2 and 17:9-10, then the siege passages the chapter cites (Wars 5.8.1-2; 6.4.5). Does either verse require a date, and which reading best explains a court trampled while the sanctuary stands?

3. The chapter holds that the New Testament was finished before AD 70, since its tenses treat the Temple as standing (Hebrews 8:13; 9:8-9; 10:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:4), and that the countdown runs in the order the letters were written, broken when Revelation was shelved last. The strongest counter-argument is that present tenses date the letters, not the event; that Barnabas, writing after the fall (16.4), calls the Temple pulled down without calling it the Lord's coming; and that shelf order never altered a word, so a future return is read from the text. Read Hebrews 8:13, 9:8-9, 10:11, then 1 John 2:18, Revelation 1:1 and 22:6. What do the tenses prove about the date, and what about the event?

Action items

1. Read Irenaeus, Against Heresies 5.30.3, in the Ante-Nicene Fathers' rendering the chapter quotes, and 2.22.5 on the age of Jesus. Copy out the sentence on Domitian and mark the three possible subjects of "was seen": the vision, the man, the name. Then read Tacitus, Annals 14.27, on Laodicea. Write one paragraph on what each passage establishes and what it does not.

2. Read Hebrews 8:13, 9:8-9, 10:11, Matthew 24:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, and Revelation 11:1-2 in one sitting, and write down the tense of each statement about the Temple. Then, with a concordance, look up tachu and en tachei at Revelation 1:1, 2:16, 3:11, 11:14, 22:6, 22:7, 22:12, 22:20, and compare Matthew 28:7 and 1 Timothy 3:14. Note whether any usage means "suddenly, whenever."

Leader's note: The pushback will come at Irenaeus, since a man two steps from John is hard to set aside, and at the count of kings in 17:10. Make sure the group reads the Irenaeus sentence as quoted and Revelation 11:1-2 and 17:9-10 in their place before deciding whether the book dates itself.

Chapter 13: Decoding the Book of Revelation

Summary

The chapter reads apokalypsis as unveiling, not catastrophe, and takes Revelation 1-11 as a letter to seven churches in the mid-60s, with gē as the land. It reads 1:7 from Zechariah 12:10-12, the seven letters as local, hairesis as a party rather than a false doctrine, and 3:10 as preservation through the hour of AD 66 to 70 (John 17:15). The throne room is Daniel 7's court; the seals follow the Olivet Discourse and Josephus; the fractions measure reach, not toll; the trumpets recapitulate the Egyptian plagues; the two witnesses are Zechariah's trees and lampstands, a witnessing people, tested against Alford's objection; the seventh trumpet transfers sovereignty.

Key passages: Revelation 1:7; Revelation 3:10; Revelation 11:1-2; Revelation 11:4; Matthew 23:35-36; Revelation 11:15

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that "all the tribes of the gē will mourn" (1:7) means the tribes of the land, from Zechariah 12:10-12, and that "those who pierced him" fixes the audience to the generation of the crucifixion. The strongest counter-argument is Koester's: John widens Zechariah's land and tribes to all the earth, and "those who pierced him" to all of Jesus' adversaries; "every eye will see him" is universal; and John uses "tribe" of every nation in 7:9, so the word need not mean Israel's twelve. Read Zechariah 12:10-12 and Matthew 24:30 beside Revelation 1:7, then 7:9. Who mourns in Zechariah, and does John's wider use of "tribe" in 7:9 unsettle the land reading?

2. The chapter holds that the seals unroll the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:4-31) and that Josephus documents them, the civil war (Wars 4.3.2), the burned grain (5.1.4), the caves (6.7.3), and reads the fractions, a fourth, a third, as a judgment's reach, not its toll. The strongest counter-argument is that war, famine and pestilence mark every age, so the seals fit any war chosen; that the chapter grades the darkened sun as "correspondence" only; and that a method making one fraction a jurisdiction and another a measure fits any number to any event. Read Revelation 6 and Matthew 24:4-31 side by side, then Ezekiel 14:21 and 5:12. Which seals name something only this war supplies, and which would fit any war?

3. The chapter holds that the two witnesses are Zechariah's two olive trees and two lampstands fused in one body (11:4; Zechariah 4:14), the royal priesthood prosecuting the covenant case, two because the Law requires two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6), the unburied bodies being what Josephus saw (Wars 4.6.3). The strongest counter-argument is Alford's, "individuality could not be more strongly indicated": they are killed, lie three and a half days, rise and ascend while enemies watch; Tertullian and Hippolytus named Enoch and Elijah from Hebrews 9:27; and the chapter grants no identification can be proved. Read Revelation 11:3-13 with Zechariah 4 and Ezekiel 37:10-11 open. Which details fit two men, which fit a people, and does the singular "mouth" (11:5) decide it?

Action items

1. Read Revelation 6 and Matthew 24:4-31 in one sitting and make a parallel chart, seal by seal, of what each text says. Then read Josephus, Wars 4.3.2, 5.1.4, and 6.7.3, as the chapter cites them, and mark on your chart which seals the chapter calls documented and which it calls correspondence. Bring the chart and one line on whether the grades are fairly assigned.

2. Using a concordance, look up every New Testament occurrence of hairesis the chapter lists: Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 24:14; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Corinthians 11:19; Galatians 5:20; and hairetikos in Titus 3:10. Write one line per passage saying whether it means a party or a false doctrine. Then read Revelation 2:6, 2:14, and 2:20 and note what the Nicolaitans, Balaam and Jezebel are actually charged with.

Leader's note: The group will push back hardest at the two witnesses as a people rather than two men, and at Philadelphia being kept through the hour rather than taken out of it (3:10). Make sure the group reads Zechariah 4:1-14 beside Revelation 11:4, and John 17:15 beside 3:10, before deciding.

Chapter 14: Decoding Revelation: The Dragon, the Beasts, and the Fall of Babylon

Summary

The chapter identifies the figures of Revelation 12-18 in the first century. The woman is Israel (Genesis 37:9-10), the dragon Satan, the war in heaven the cross (John 12:31), the flight the church's departure to Pella. The sea beast is Rome: seven kings counted from Julius Caesar so that Nero "is" (17:10), 666 as Nero Caesar and thērion in Hebrew letters, 616 the Latin form. The land beast is the Jewish establishment, its mark the Tyrian shekel. The bowls are the curses of Deuteronomy 28; the Harlot is Jerusalem by five proofs; the ten horns are the generals Josephus lists (Wars 2.20.3-4); chapter 18 is the city's fall.

Key passages: Revelation 13:18; Revelation 17:9-10; Revelation 17:12; Revelation 17:16; Revelation 18:24; Matthew 23:35-37

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the Harlot is Jerusalem: "the great city" where the Lord was crucified (11:8; 17:18), harlot being the prophets' word for a covenant wife (Isaiah 1:21), drunk with blood Jesus charged to Jerusalem (17:6; Matthew 23:35-37), and burned by the beast she rides (17:16), which Rome could not do to itself. The strongest counter-argument is the oldest: Tertullian (An Answer to the Jews 9) and Victorinus took her for Rome, as most moderns do; Rome is seven-hilled and ruled kings; and chapter 18's merchants and shipmasters mourn a maritime power. Read Ezekiel 16:37-41 beside Revelation 17:1-6 and 17:16. Which city do the details fit, and what weight does the beast's hatred of the woman carry?

2. The chapter holds that 666 is Nero Caesar in Hebrew letters, confirmed by the word thērion reaching the same total and by the 616 variant (Papyrus 115), the Latin form of the name, which Irenaeus already knew (Against Heresies 5.30.1). The strongest counter-argument is that gematria fits many names, as the chapter's table shows with Teitan and Domitian; that Irenaeus, nearest to John's circle, listed Teitan rather than Nero; and that the count needs a Hebrew spelling in Greek-speaking churches, and the short spelling of Caesar at that. Read Revelation 13:18 in two translations, noting "the number of a man" against "a human number." How many lines must converge before an identification is probable, and does 616 help or hurt?

3. The chapter holds that the beast from the land is the Jewish establishment, which cried "no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), hired prophets who worked signs (Wars 6.5.2-3), and killed for the beast; its mark is the Tyrian shekel required at the Temple, so "buy or sell" reaches only the Temple economy. The strongest counter-argument is that the second beast enforces worship of the first, which fits Asia's imperial priesthoods better than a

Sanhedrin that never compelled Caesar-worship; that a coin paid once is no mark on hand and forehead; and that one market shrinks "buy or sell." Read Revelation 13:11-18 beside John 19:12-15, Deuteronomy 6:8, and Exodus 30:15. Which first-century body both worked signs and killed for the beast?

Action items

1. Read Revelation 17 and 18 in one sitting and list every detail the text gives about the woman: her clothing, her cup, where she sits, her guilt, and her end. Then read Ezekiel 16:15 and 16:37-41, Ezekiel 23:25-29 and 23:32-33, and Exodus 28:5-6, 17-20, and 36-38. Make a two-column chart, details that fit Jerusalem and details that fit Rome, and count them.

2. Read Josephus, Wars 2.20.3-4, the appointment of the commanders after Cestius's defeat, and count them yourself, district by district, without the chapter's table. Then read Revelation 17:12-17 and write whether men appointed at the end of AD 66 fit "with the beast for one hour." Note which of the ten are dead by Wars 3.2.2, 4.5.2, and 4.6.1.

Leader's note: Expect the sharpest pushback at Babylon as Jerusalem, since the oldest readers and most modern ones say Rome. Make sure the group reads Revelation 11:8 and 17:16, with Ezekiel 16:37-41, before deciding whether the beast can hate and burn its own capital.

Chapter 15: Decoding Revelation: The Wedding, the Binding, and the New Creation

Summary

The chapter reads Revelation 19-22 as the passing of the old covenant order. The wedding of the Lamb fulfills Matthew 22:7 and the remarriage the prophets promised (Jeremiah 31:31-32). Revelation 20 steps back to the cross: the angel seized (krateō) and bound (deō) the dragon, a jurisdictional binding "that he should deceive the nations no more," for "a thousand years," Scripture's idiom of full measure, with "the thousand years" at each terminus (20:3, 5, 7). The thrones are in heaven; the release gathered the nations against Jerusalem in AD 66 to 70; the Great White Throne is entered at death; the new creation is the new covenant.

Key passages: Matthew 22:7; Revelation 20:2-3; Revelation 20:4; Revelation 20:7-10; Revelation 21:1; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that Revelation 20:2 has two verbs kept apart, ekratēsen, seized, and edēsen, bound, jurisdictional as in Matthew 12:29 and 16:19, so the binding is a ruling that Satan would "deceive the nations no more" (20:3), from the cross. The strongest counter-argument is that the text heaps up restraint, key, chain, abyss, shut, sealed, which reads as removal; that Paul still calls Satan "the god of this age" who blinds minds (2 Corinthians 4:4) after the cross; and that Koester reads the terms so yet places them ahead. Read Revelation 20:1-3 beside Matthew 12:28-29, 2 Corinthians 4:4, and Acts 26:18. What does the text say the binding prevents, and can a bound deceiver still blind individuals?

2. The chapter holds that "a thousand years" is Scripture's idiom for full measure (Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8), that John writes "the thousand years" at the terminus (20:3, 5, 7), and that it ended at the release before the war of AD 66. The strongest counter-argument is that every figurative reader the chapter names, Augustine, Andrew, Terry, Warfield, Boettner, ran the span to his own day or beyond, none under forty years; that so large a

number sits oddly on so short a span; and that Koester notes the reign "does not end at that point" (22:5). Read Revelation 20:2-7, marking each "a" and "the." Does the idiom allow a short span, and what in the text fixes the terminus?

3. The chapter holds that the release (20:7-9) is the nations gathered against Jerusalem in AD 66 to 70, Gog instrument and host destroyed (Ezekiel 38:16, 21-22), fire on the besiegers, the sword inside the walls, "the beloved city" being God's lament for what Jerusalem was meant to be (Jeremiah 12:7). The strongest counter-argument is that John's surrounded city stands and the besiegers burn, whereas in AD 70 the besiegers won and the city burned; that Gog falls while God's people are delivered; and that the chapter grants a correspondence of pattern, which Josephus does not draw. Read Revelation 20:7-10 and Ezekiel 38:8-22, then Jeremiah 12:7. Whom does the fire consume, and can a city under judgment be the beloved city?

Action items

1. Using Thayer's lexicon or a concordance, look up krateō and deō. Write out the senses Thayer gives krateō and note which he assigns to Revelation 20:2; then read Matthew 12:29, 16:19, and 18:18 and record the sense of deō in each. Finish with one sentence: is the binding of 20:2 a rope or a ruling, and what in the lexicon decides it?

2. Read Revelation 20:1-15 slowly with a pen. For each verse write what the text states and what you had assumed: in heaven or on earth; all Christians or the beheaded; "a thousand years" or "the thousand years"; a scene or a system. Then read 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and write one paragraph on what a believer meets at death on each reading.

Leader's note: The group will push back hardest at a thousand years that ended before the war of AD 66 and at a Great White Throne that each person enters at death. Make sure the group reads Revelation 20:1-10 with the articles marked, and 20:11-15 beside 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, before deciding.

Chapter 16: Jesus Christ Triumphant Over All

Summary

The chapter traces worship from the counterfeit temple systems the celestial rulers built, through God's design for Israel, where He spoke, wrote, forbade images, demanded justice and was present, through the rejected prophets (Hebrews 11:37-38) and four centuries of silence, to the cross. There the veil tore (Matthew 27:51), Christ took the keys of Death and Hades (Revelation 1:18), disarmed the rulers (Colossians 2:15), and received all authority (Matthew 28:18); Acts 1:11 is read as a comparison of manner. God now dwells in people (Ephesians 2:19-22). Ezekiel 43:10-11 made the temple conditional; Julian's attempt to rebuild it in AD 363 failed. Believers are the sons of God (Romans 8:14-17).

Key passages: Matthew 27:51; Colossians 2:15; Acts 1:11; Ezekiel 43:10-11; Ephesians 2:19-22; Romans 8:14-17

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that Acts 1:11's "in just the same way" is hon tropon, a comparison of kind, as in three other passages, so the coming matched the going, with clouds, in judgment, as Yahweh came to Egypt (Isaiah 19:1), within the council's generation (Matthew 26:64). The strongest counter-argument is that the disciples watched a bodily

Jesus received by a cloud, and the angels tie His coming to what they "watched"; that the three parallels compare visible acts; and that a coming no one saw hardly fits their words. Read Acts 1:9-11, then Acts 7:28, 2 Timothy 3:8, and Matthew 23:37, and Isaiah 19:1. What does "manner" compare in each, and what did Egypt see when the LORD came?

2. The chapter holds that Ezekiel 43:10-11 made the temple of Ezekiel's vision conditional on repentance, that the condition was never met, so no Third Temple will be built, and that Julian's attempt in AD 363, which Ammianus (Res Gestae 23.1.2-3) records, is the last entry in the Temple's history. The strongest counter-argument is that Ezekiel 40-48 gives measurements too exact for a house never meant to stand; that "if they are ashamed" conditions the telling of the form, not God's promise to dwell; that one failed attempt settles nothing; and that Ammianus names no cause, as the chapter admits. Read Ezekiel 43:10-11 in two translations, then 47:1-12 beside Revelation 22:1-2. Is the promise conditional, and where did the river go?

3. The chapter holds that "the last enemy that will be abolished is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26) names covenantal death, since "the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (15:56), ended when the old covenant fell, while biological death continues. The strongest counter-argument is that 1 Corinthians 15 is Paul's chapter on bodily resurrection; that "death" there stands beside the perishable putting on the imperishable (15:54); that "covenantal death" imports a category Paul does not name; and that believers still die. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 and 15:50-57 in one sitting. What does Paul call death in each verse, does verse 56 define it, and what does a believer's dying mean if death is abolished?

Action items

1. Read Hebrews 10:1-20 in one sitting, then Leviticus 16:4 and Matthew 27:51-53. Write one paragraph on what the high priest's single day behind the veil required and what "a new and living way" (Hebrews 10:19-20) changed. Then write one sentence answering, for yourself: what am I doing with this access?

2. Read the three accounts of Julian's attempt as the chapter cites them: Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae 23.1.2-3; Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 5.2-7; Sozomen, Church History 5.22. Make a three-column chart: what each says happened, what cause each names or declines to name, and how near each stood to the event. Add one line on what a pagan officer's silence about the cause is worth.

Leader's note: Expect pushback at Acts 1:11, the verse most quoted for a visible return, and at "death" read as covenantal in 1 Corinthians 15. Make sure the group reads Acts 1:9-11 with the chapter's three hon tropon passages, and 1 Corinthians 15:56 in its place, before deciding. ## Chapter 17: The Rise of the Kingdom

Chapter 17: The Rise of the Kingdom

Summary

The chapter argues that the kingdom arrived when the Spirit did. It reads Acts 1:6-8 as correcting the disciples' claim to know the timetable, not their expectation, and Acts 3:19-21 as naming a restoration John the Baptist had begun (Matthew 17:11-12); Joel 2 was kept at Pentecost and Joel 3 set the precedent for AD 70. It then argues from history: a Roman world of infant exposure, slavery and the arena, Christians who nursed plague victims (Eusebius, Church History 7.22), Stark's growth curve, the dignity of women, Basil's hospital, Telemachus, and

Julian's complaint. It answers the question of Israel from Galatians 3:28-29, Matthew 21:43 and Romans 11:1-5.

Key passages: Acts 1:6; Acts 1:7-8; Acts 3:19-21; Matthew 17:11-12; Matthew 13:31-33; Matthew 21:43

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that in Acts 1:6-8 Jesus did not defer the kingdom but corrected the disciples' assumption that they could know the timetable, and that the kingdom came at Pentecost. The strongest counter-argument is that the disciples asked about restoring the kingdom "to Israel" and Jesus left that standing, that "times or epochs which the Father has fixed" points to an unknown future, and that Peter in Acts 3:21 speaks of heaven receiving Christ "until the times of restoration," which sounds unfinished. Read Acts 1:6-8, Acts 2:16, Acts 3:19-21 and Matthew 17:11-12. Does the "until" of 3:21 set a term or name a goal, and what did "restore all things" mean when Jesus applied it to John?

2. The chapter offers the rise of the church inside the Roman Empire, hospitals, rescued infants, nursed plague victims, as the strongest historical evidence that the kingdom was established at the cross and grew as the mustard seed predicted. The strongest counter-argument is that every school affirms the kingdom's growth in the present age, so the record says nothing about whether the end of the age has come; that Stark credited the growth to community, not to a bound Satan; and that history is not exegesis. Read Matthew 13:31-33, then Eusebius, Church History 7.22.7 and 7.22.10, and Julian, Letter 22. What does the parable say about how the kingdom grows, and does that record fit a kingdom present, future, or either?

3. The chapter holds that the "Israel of God" is the multi-ethnic body of believers, that the kingdom was given to "a nation producing its fruit" (Matthew 21:43), and that no national restoration around a Temple is promised, while Jewish believers remain a remnant (Romans 11:1-5). The strongest counter-argument is that Paul's olive tree reads as a national grafting-in, that Galatians 6:16 can name Jewish believers, that Matthew 21:43 removes the kingdom from the chief priests and not from the nation, and that the land promise was unconditional. Read Galatians 3:28-29 and 6:16, Matthew 21:43-45 and Romans 11:1-5. Who is the "you" in Matthew 21:43, who the "nation," and what does Paul's remnant imply about a future national role?

Action items

1. Read Eusebius, Church History 7.22.7 and 7.22.10, where Dionysius of Alexandria describes the pagan and Christian responses to the plague, and Julian, Letter 22 to Arsacius, as the chapter cites them. Write in one sentence each what the bishop and the emperor say in their own words. Then read Matthew 13:31-33 and write one paragraph on whether what they describe matches the parable's picture of how the kingdom grows.

2. Read Acts 1:6-8, Acts 2:16-21, Acts 3:19-21 and Matthew 17:11-12 in one sitting, following the word "restore." Using a concordance, find the Greek verb behind "restore" in Matthew 17:11 and Acts 1:6 and the noun behind "restoration" in Acts 3:21. Write one line per passage saying what is restored and when, then compare Acts 3:21 in the WEB and the NASB95 and note any difference in how "until" is rendered.

Leader's note: The pushback will come at Acts 1:6-8, which most of the group has heard as a deferral, and at the use of history as evidence for a fulfilled prophecy. Make sure the group reads

Acts 3:19-21 with Matthew 17:11-12 open beside it before deciding what "the restoration of all things" meant to Peter's hearers.

Chapter 18: The Rock That Crushed the Statue

Summary

The chapter reads Daniel 2:34-35 and 2:44-45 as the frame of the book: the stone cut without hands struck the image and became a mountain. It traces the fall of the pagan temple system in three phases, conversion from AD 30 to 313 (Tertullian, Apology 50; Athanasius, On the Incarnation 46-47), the withdrawal of state support from 313 to 380, and the Theodosian decrees from 380 to 451 (Codex Theodosianus 16.10). It describes what the temples were, from Herodotus 1.199 to Deuteronomy 23:17-18, reads "in the days of those kings" with the verb qum as a founding followed by growth, and does not commend the sword.

Key passages: Daniel 2:34-35; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:12; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Matthew 12:28; Psalm 82:8

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the kingdom was "set up" (qum) while Hellenistic successor kings reigned, that Daniel 7:12's extension carried their order to the first century, and that the stone fell when the King said "God's Kingdom has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28). The strongest counter-argument is one the chapter concedes: no Seleucid or Ptolemaic king reigned in AD 30, so the kingdom in whose days the stone fell was Rome; the extension is the book's own inference; and a stone that fills "the whole earth" fits a consummation still ahead. Read Daniel 2:31-45 whole, then Daniel 7:12. Must the striking and the filling be one moment, and which kings must be reigning when the stone falls?

2. The chapter holds that the temples emptied through three centuries of conversion before the laws came, and that the pagan system's collapse fulfills Daniel 2:35 and, with Andrew of Caesarea, proves the binding. The strongest counter-argument is that the decisive closures came by the sword of the state, with soldiers at the Serapeum, hard to credit to a stone "cut without hands"; and that Daniel 2:44 says the kingdom will "consume all these kingdoms," which a converted Rome did not do to Rome. Read Daniel 2:34-35 and 2:44-45, Athanasius, On the Incarnation 46-47, and Codex Theodosianus 16.10.10. Does the argument rest on the emptying or the edicts, and can a fulfillment span five centuries?

3. The chapter holds that the temples were the infrastructure of the sons of God, capturing sexuality and worship, as Herodotus 1.199 and the qedeshim of Deuteronomy 23:17-18 show, and that their fall is the healing of Revelation 22:2. The strongest counter-argument is that Budin reads Herodotus as Greek misunderstanding, which the chapter grants; that the celestial rulers behind the temples come from Chapter 4, not from any source quoted here; and that Revelation 22:2 sets the healing leaves by the river of life, not in Alexandria. Read Deuteronomy 23:17-18 in the KJV and NIV, 1 Kings 14:24, 2 Kings 23:7 and Revelation 22:1-5. What were the qedeshim doing at Judah's high places, and where does John place the healing?

Action items

1. Read Daniel 2:31-45 in one sitting. Make a chart with four rows for the statue's metals and the feet, the kingdom the chapter assigns to each (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Alexander's Greece, the Hellenistic successor kingdoms) and the verse. In a second column, write the

reading you were taught. Mark where the two diverge and write one sentence on what each reading must do with “in the days of those kings” in 2:44.

2. Read Tertullian, Apology 50, Athanasius, On the Incarnation 46-47, and Gibbon’s sentence on “the ruin of paganism” as the chapter quotes them, then Codex Theodosianus 16.10.10 and 16.10.12. Make two columns, what emptied by persuasion and what closed by law, and place each witness in one. Bring one sentence on which column a stone “cut without hands” belongs to and why.

Leader’s note: The pushback will come at whether a Hellenistic fourth kingdom can hold when no such king reigned in AD 30, and at whether a faith spread partly by imperial decree can be the stone cut without hands. Make sure the group reads Daniel 2:44-45 beside Daniel 7:12, and the chapter’s own sentence that it reports the decrees as history and does not commend the sword, before deciding.

Chapter 19: Under New Management

Summary

The chapter argues that at the cross the management of the earth changed hands, reading the schēma of 1 Corinthians 7:31 as the world’s order of governance and listing six changes: authority, access, dwelling, currency, scope and righteousness. It lays out the compartments of Sheol from 1 Enoch 21-22 and the Descensus, as witnesses, not Scripture. It reads Revelation 21 as two concurrent realities, a new earth under new governance and a new heaven entered at death, placing death inside Isaiah’s new heavens (Isaiah 65:20; 66:24), reading “righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13) as believers and Romans 8:19-22 as the covenant order. It answers the twentieth century and the sickbed.

Key passages: 1 Corinthians 7:31; Isaiah 65:20; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:2-3; Revelation 21:4; Romans 8:19-22

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the “new earth” is this earth newly governed and the “new heaven” is the Holy City entered at death, so Revelation 21:4 is kept in the city, not on this planet, since Isaiah places death inside the new heavens (65:20; 66:24). The strongest counter-argument is that John sees the city “coming down out of heaven” and hears “God’s dwelling is with people”; that one renewed creation without death is the plain sense of 21:1-4; that the two-location reading is the author’s inference; and that Isaiah 65:20 can describe a stage before the consummation. Read Isaiah 65:17-25 and 66:22-24, then Revelation 21:1-4. Where does each locate death, and does “out of heaven” say where the city lands?

2. The chapter reads the “creation” of Romans 8:19-22 as the created order under the old covenant, from the birth pains of Matthew 24:8, the revealing of the sons of God, and “the body of this death” of Romans 7:24. The strongest counter-argument is the one the chapter names, Cranfield, Moo and Schreiner reading ktisis as the sub-human creation: it was subjected “not of its own will,” unlike humanity, which sinned willingly; Genesis 3:17 cursed the ground; and “the redemption of our body” (8:23) is bodily resurrection. Read Romans 8:18-25, 2 Corinthians 5:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 15:44. What is subjected, in hope of what, and does “the liberty of the glory of the children of God” fit persons or matter?

3. The chapter holds that the kingdom’s authority is real, that a church taught cessationism and a postponed kingdom met the twentieth century unarmed, and that bodily suffering is

another question, since the kingdom conquered the second death, not bodily death. The strongest counter-argument is that "already and not yet" explains Paul's thorn and Revelation 21:4 with fewer added pieces; that authority "over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19) sits awkwardly beside no promise of healing; and that the counterfactual about the German church cannot be tested. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, 2 Timothy 4:20, 1 Timothy 5:23 and Mark 6:5-6. What do these texts say about delegated authority and the suffering body, and which framework needs fewer assumptions?

Action items

1. Read Isaiah 65:17-25 and Isaiah 66:22-24 in one sitting, in the WEB and one other translation. Mark every mention of death, old age, sinners or corpses. Then read Revelation 21:1-8 and 2 Peter 3:13. Write one paragraph answering two questions: can the phrase "new heavens and a new earth" contain death in Isaiah's usage, and if it can, what does each writer say is new?

2. Read 1 Enoch 22:1-13 in Charles's translation, as the chapter cites it, beside Luke 16:19-31. Make a two-column chart: what Raphael says of each hollow, and what the parable says of Lazarus, the rich man and the chasm. Mark where the parable agrees, where it is silent, and where it differs. Bring one sentence on what weight a text that is not Scripture should carry when it is read beside Scripture.

Leader's note: The room will divide at Revelation 21:4, the verse most people hold for a renewed earth without death, and at the claim that the New Jerusalem is not coming to this planet. Make sure the group reads Isaiah 65:17-25 and 66:22-24 for itself, and the chapter's own paragraph admitting where it moves from text to inference, before deciding.

Chapter 20: The Anatomy of the Deception

Summary

The chapter traces sixteen seeds across nineteen centuries, from the loss of the Jewish prophetic idiom after AD 70 (Harnack) and Tertullian's rule that moved time stamps to the reader's day, through Cerinthus, Papias and Justin on a literal thousand years, Irenaeus's merger of three figures, the late date of Revelation, Augustine's age of the church, Joachim, Ribera, Lacunza, Irving's circle, Darby, Scofield, and the dated predictions since. It answers the Polycarp objection from his own letter, lists Lightfoot, Newton, Calvin, Spurgeon, Farrar, Terry and Young on Matthew 24, reads 1 Thessalonians 4:17 as a royal reception, and closes with John 17: there is no lifeboat coming.

Key passages: 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Titus 2:13; John 17:15; Acts 17:11

Discussion questions

1. The chapter reads 1 Thessalonians 4:17 as a royal reception, the people going out to meet the arriving King and returning with Him, as in Acts 28:15 and Matthew 25:6, and finds the direction in Paul's verb, "descend." The strongest counter-argument is Ice's and Bruce's, which the chapter quotes: the word does not include a return with the dignitary, Milligan thought the saints "accompany Him back to heaven," and "so we will be with the Lord forever" reads as a state after an event not yet seen. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13 through 5:11 unbroken, then Acts 28:15 and Matthew 25:6. In each, who moves, which way, and what in 4:16 says which way the Lord is traveling?

2. The chapter holds that the early fathers looked for a future Antichrist and return because the Gentile church lost the Hebrew prophetic idiom, and that Polycarp's letter contains no future tribulation, Antichrist, earthly thousand years or date. The strongest counter-argument is that Irenaeus credits "the elders who saw John," that Justin told Trypho all right-minded Christians expected a thousand years in Jerusalem, that men one step from John outweigh a later reconstruction, and that silence in a short letter proves little. Read Polycarp, To the Philippians 2, 6, 7 and 9, and Justin, Dialogue with Trypho 80-81. Which sentences assert a coming beyond what Peter and Paul wrote before AD 70, and does Justin's "many… think otherwise" weaken his testimony?

3. The chapter holds that no pretribulation rapture system can be found before the 1830s, that its line runs from Ribera through Irving to Darby, and that Jesus did not pray for His followers' removal from the world (John 17:15). The strongest counter-argument is one the chapter states itself, that a doctrine is not false because a Jesuit held it first; that the sermon under Ephraem's name shows the thought is older; that assigning the system's design to the hierarchy cannot be tested; and that John 17:15 concerns protection, not timing. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, John 14:2-3, John 17:15-18 and Revelation 4:1. Which of these, on its own words, removes the church from the earth, and what must be added?

Action items

1. Read Robert Baxter's Narrative of Facts at the pages the chapter gives (pp. 17-19, 70, 92 and 118), or the chapter's quotations if the book is not at hand, then Deuteronomy 18:22 and 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21. Write one paragraph on how Baxter applied the test to his own word of January 1832, and one sentence on how your own circle tests a prophetic word that names a date.

2. Make a chart of the sixteen seeds: the planter, the century, what it added, and whether the chapter says it was condemned, ridiculed, banned, or simply inherited. Mark the ones you were taught without being told their origin. Then choose one seed you think the chapter weighs too heavily or too lightly, write your reason in two sentences, and bring it to the group.

Leader's note: The pushback will come hardest at 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and at the claim that no early father, Polycarp included, can be shown to have looked past AD 70. Make sure the group reads 1 Thessalonians 4:13 through 5:11 without the chapter break, with Acts 28:15 open beside it, before deciding whether the picture is an evacuation or a reception.

Chapter 21: The Invisible War

Summary

The chapter reads the four terms of Ephesians 6:12 as four ranks of the dragon's hierarchy, with Daniel 10's princes of Persia and Greece as allotted rulers since removed. It sets out a permission structure from Job 1-2, 1 Kings 22:19-23, Luke 22:31-32 and 1 Samuel 8, including that sin gives the enemy a topos (Ephesians 4:27), and distinguishes the sentenced seventy from the hierarchy still operating. It traces the weapon of a single thought from Genesis 3 to Rwanda, finds in Ezekiel 28 that trade preceded pride, names mammon the on-ramp, and shows in John 11, Acts 16, Acts 19 and Balaam how a gain builds a wall.

Key passages: Ephesians 6:12; Daniel 10:13; Job 1:12; Luke 22:31; Ezekiel 28:5; Acts 19:24-27

Discussion questions

1. The chapter reads archas, exousias, kosmokratoras and the spiritual forces of wickedness as four ranks, architects, commanders, world rulers and operatives, and holds that this hierarchy is the dragon's own, distinct from the seventy of Psalm 82, sentenced, stripped at the cross, and removed in AD 70. The strongest counter-argument is that Paul heaps such terms elsewhere for fullness, "thrones or dominions or principalities or powers" (Colossians 1:16), that most commentators read them as one description, and that two separate hierarchies rest on the book's construction, not on any verse naming both. Read Ephesians 6:12, Ephesians 1:19-23, Colossians 1:16 and Colossians 2:15 with an interlinear. Are the same terms used in each, and what tells you whether Paul ranks them?

2. The chapter holds that the enemy operates only within permissions God grants, limits and revokes, as Job, Micaiah's vision and Luke 22:31 show, and that righteousness closes doors while sin opens them. The strongest counter-argument is that the satan of Job is an officer of the court doing a function, as von Rad and Stokes, cited by the chapter, describe; that joining Job, 1 Kings 22 and Luke 22 into one structure crosses genres and centuries; and that "sin gives place" shades toward the reasoning of Job's friends, whom God rebuked. Read Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6, 1 Kings 22:19-23, Luke 22:31-32 and Ephesians 4:27. In each, who petitions and who sets the limit? Does any text blame the sufferer's sin?

3. The chapter holds that the church has overlooked the channel of ruin Ezekiel 28 names three times, trade, that the lifted heart followed the riches in Tyre, Deuteronomy 8 and Hosea 13:6 alike, and that the deceit of riches (Matthew 13:22) chokes the word. The strongest counter-argument is that Ezekiel 28 addresses the king of a merchant city, so trade is its natural subject, not a general law; that the oracle opens with the lifted heart (28:2) before explaining it; and that Scripture names pride, lust and fear as roots too. Read Ezekiel 28:1-19 whole, Deuteronomy 8:11-18 and Matthew 6:19-24. In what order does each place wealth, the lifted heart and false worship, and does it hold in all three?

Action items

1. Read Job 1 and 2 in one sitting. For each of the two rounds write four lines: who raises Job's name first, what the adversary asks, what is granted, what is withheld. Then read 1 Kings 22:19-23 and Luke 22:31-32 and add a row for each. Bring one sentence on whether the five elements the chapter lists appear in all four, and one on where the pattern is thinnest.

2. Read Acts 16:16-24 and Acts 19:23-41 in one sitting. For each, write four lines as the chapter does: the gain, the threat to it, the reason spoken aloud, and what the magistrate or crowd heard. Then, using a concordance, look up the Hebrew word kena'an in Hosea 12:7, Zephaniah 1:11, Isaiah 23:8 and Zechariah 14:21 and note how your translation renders it in each place.

Leader's note: Expect pushback at the four-rank reading of one verse and at "sin opens doors," which some in the room will hear as blame for the suffering. Make sure the group reads Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-6 for itself, noting who speaks Job's name first in each round, before deciding what the permission structure does and does not claim.

Chapter 22: The Visible Machinery

Summary

The chapter looks for the fingerprints of Ephesians 6:12 in institutions: the Borgia and Avignon papacy, the Frankfurt School, the Kenosha broadcast and the Secretary of State's address of July 2026, the dismantled multigenerational household, the funding of district attorney races, abortion read against Molech, and money created as debt since 1694 (Proverbs 22:7; Deuteronomy 28:12-13, 44). It names a five-step template, centralize, control, sever, isolate, replace, applies it to the gathering gutted from Constantine through Warfield and the seeker model, weighs deliverance testimony and the aerial phenomena record as an exercise, offers a four-move test from Genesis 3, ends in Portland, and states what would prove it wrong.

Key passages: Romans 1:28; 1 Samuel 8:11-17; Proverbs 22:7; 1 Corinthians 14:26; 1 John 4:1; Matthew 7:16

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that a five-step template recurs across papacy, academy, family, courts, money and church, and that its one direction, severing humanity from its Creator, makes the Ephesians 6:12 framework the best explanation. The strongest counter-argument is one the chapter raises against itself: a framework that explains Borgia popes, Marx, donors and debt money alike risks explaining nothing; ambition, incentives and drift account for the patterns without remainder; the cases cluster on one political side; and "not against flesh and blood" warns against naming men as the enemy. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and Romans 1:18-28, then the chapter's paragraph on what would prove it wrong. Which cases do human causes fully explain, and what, if anything, is left over?

2. The chapter holds that the apostolic gathering was participatory, "each one of you" (1 Corinthians 14:26), that Constantine, a professional clergy, cessationism and the seeker model dismantled it, and that Warfield's doctrine disarmed the church of weapons Paul listed in 1 Corinthians 12. The strongest counter-argument is that Warfield, Gaffin and Schreiner argue from 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 and Ephesians 2:20 that the sign gifts were foundational; that Paul describes Corinth's gathering in order to restrain it; that the recovered sermon bore the fruit the chapter honors; and that REVEAL indicted one model, not the sermon. Read 1 Corinthians 14 whole, then Acts 2:42-43 and Acts 5:16. What does Paul command, what does he restrain, and what gathering would obey both?

3. The chapter proposes, as an exercise and not as fact, that unidentified aerial phenomena may belong to the rebel host of Ephesians 6:12, cites a deliverance session and a book whose own disclaimer calls it fiction, and builds from Genesis 3:1-5 a four-move test for any voice. The strongest counter-argument is that Scripture nowhere identifies craft with spirits; that testimony from a source Jesus calls a liar (John 8:44) should carry no weight at all; that Heiser, whom the chapter names, answered such readings for years; and that the Watchers of Jude 6 are bound. Read Genesis 3:1-5, John 8:44, 1 John 4:1 and Matthew 7:16. Does the four-move test hold against voices you can name, and what is testing for?

Action items

1. Read 1 Corinthians 14 in one sitting, then Acts 2:42-43 and Acts 5:16. List every verb that describes what members of the gathering do. Then list what members of your own congregation do in a typical Sunday service. Set the two lists side by side and bring the three largest differences, with one sentence on whether each is a loss, a gain, or neither, and on what Paul's restraints in the same chapter would require.

2. Read Deuteronomy 28:12-13 and 28:44, Deuteronomy 15:1-2, Leviticus 25:10, Nehemiah 5:3-5 and Proverbs 22:7 in one sitting, then the Bank of England paper the chapter cites,

"Money creation in the modern economy," Quarterly Bulletin 2014 Q1, pages 14 to 16. Write one paragraph on what the law set against compounding debt, and one sentence on whether the Bank's own description bears on it.

Leader's note: This chapter will draw the sharpest pushback in the guide, on its political cases and on the aerial phenomena section, and some will hear it as partisan. Make sure the group reads the chapter's paragraph on what would prove it wrong, its sentence that the men named are "instruments and not the enemy," and Ephesians 6:12 in its context, before deciding whether the pattern is a pattern. ## Chapter 23: The Restoration

Chapter 23: The Restoration

Summary

The chapter asks why, if the kingdom is here, the world still looks this way. Its answer: the kingdom did not fail; its people were told to wait while the village collapsed. Satan is in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10); his structure in Ephesians 6:12 is not, as 1945 left rubble after a real victory. It lists what was dismantled: the kitchen table, the front porch, the absent father (1 Corinthians 4:15), forgotten elders, hoarded knowledge (Luke 11:52; Matthew 10:8), outsourced care, the screen, lost trades, the church as audience. It closes with the ten bridesmaids: the oil is the Spirit's supply, and the deception told believers their lamps could never burn at full flame.

Key passages: Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 20:10; 1 Corinthians 4:15; Luke 11:52; Matthew 10:8; Matthew 25:1-13

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the world's suffering does not disprove the kingdom's arrival; like rubble after a signed surrender, it shows the cost of leaving unused an authority already given, since Satan is removed (Revelation 20:10) while the structure of Ephesians 6:12 still operates. The strongest counter-argument is that the analogy proves too much: a victory that leaves children starving for two thousand years looks less like unenforced authority than like a completion still promised, and making the church's failure the explanation for every evil is a heavy charge. Read Ephesians 6:12 and Revelation 20:10 in their settings. Does Paul describe a mopping-up operation after a surrender or a war still contested, and what in the text decides?

2. The chapter reads the parable of the ten bridesmaids as kept for that generation while the lesson of the oil outlives it: the oil is the Spirit's supply, not transferable, and the cessationist framework drew a line around what believers were allowed to expect from Him. The strongest counter-argument is that the parable is about readiness for a coming still ahead, that the oil has been read as faith, grace, or good works rather than the gifts, and that a cessationist denies none of the Spirit's indwelling presence, only the sign gifts. Read Matthew 25:1-13 in one sitting. What does the text itself say the oil is, and what alone separates the five from the five?

3. The chapter holds that the church was designed as an extended family with spiritual fathers (1 Corinthians 4:15) and a functioning body (1 Corinthians 12), and that a theology of imminent ending drains the motivation to invest in the next generation. The strongest counter-argument is that expectation of Christ's return has fueled missions, schools, and mercy, that Paul held a near hope while raising sons in the faith, and that absent fathers, screens, and nursing homes afflict congregations of every eschatology, so the cause is cultural. Read 1 Corinthians 4:15 and 1 Corinthians 12 together. What does

Paul expect members to do for one another, and which of those practices has your own church kept or lost?

Action items

1. Read Matthew 25:1-13 in one sitting. Write one paragraph on what you were taught the oil represents and one on what the text itself says. Then read Luke 11:52 and Matthew 10:8, and list one piece of knowledge or skill, spiritual or practical, that you have received and not passed on, with the name of one person you could pass it to this month.

2. Make a chart of the nine losses the chapter names: table, porch, father, elders, mentor, outsourced care, screen, trades, spectator church. For each, write one line on how it stands in your own household and congregation. Then have a conversation with the oldest believer you know and ask what the church did for one another in their childhood that it no longer does. Bring one answer to the group.

Leader's note: The pushback will come on the claim that eschatology, rather than economics or culture, emptied the village, and on calling the lost expectation of signs and wonders the enemy's cleverest theft. Make sure the group reads Matthew 25:1-13 and 1 Corinthians 4:15 for itself before deciding what the oil is and whose job the fatherless child in the pew is.

Chapter 24: Rebuilding the Village

Summary

The chapter turns from diagnosis to practice. After the matchstick vision (Matthew 18:20; 2 Timothy 1:6) it gives steps: reclaim the table, know your neighbors, step into the gap for the fatherless, bring elders home, learn a trade, restructure the gathering (Tertullian, Apology 39), reclaim children from screens, care for your own. It argues the kingdom is power, not talk (1 Corinthians 4:20; Matthew 10:8; John 14:12), citing Keener and Nazareth's unbelief (Mark 6:5-6); teaches delegated authority through the sheriff's badge (Luke 10:19) while guarding Gethsemane (Luke 22:42); describes the filament of undivided prayer (James 1:6-8; Mark 5:36), cautioning from Job; and closes with "Rise Up! Help the Home…Less."

Key passages: Matthew 18:20; Matthew 10:8; Mark 6:5-6; Luke 10:19; Luke 22:42; James 1:6-8

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons" (Matthew 10:8) is standing orders for every believer, and that the absence of miracles in Western churches is a statement about expectation, not about God's will, as Nazareth shows (Mark 6:5-6). The strongest counter-argument is that Matthew 10 was a commission to the twelve for one mission, that Keener's catalogue shows God still heals in His providence without showing that every believer holds an apostolic gift, and that reading unanswered prayer as insufficient expectation lays a burden on the sick. Read Matthew 10:8, Mark 6:5-6, and John 14:12. To whom is each addressed, and what in the text widens or narrows it?

2. The chapter teaches that where God has revealed His will (Luke 10:19; Acts 16:18), praying "if it is Your will" is not humility but a failure to recognize the badge, while Gethsemane (Luke 22:42) marks a categorical difference between commanding enemies and yielding to the Father's purpose. The strongest counter-argument is that the line is the chapter's, not the text's, that Luke 10:19 was spoken to the seventy, and that a sufferer rarely knows in advance whether an affliction is the enemy's work or a larger purpose, so

the conditional prayer is often the honest one. Read Luke 10:19, Acts 16:18, and Luke 22:42 with Mark 14:36. How would you tell, before praying, which category you stand in?

3. The chapter presents the filament vision: doubt forks a prayer's trajectory (James 1:6-8; Mark 11:23), Jairus kept his straight (Mark 5:36), and it guards the principle: Job's loss was not a forked prayer (Job 42:7), and suffering despite faithful prayer proves no fork. The strongest counter-argument is that a private vision cannot carry doctrinal weight, that James 1:6-8 concerns a double-minded life, not a mechanism of prayer, that Mark 11:23 promises no outcomes, and that the chapter's own caution leaves the principle untestable yet able to wound. Read James 1:6-8, Mark 5:23, 5:35, and 5:36, and Job 1:8 and 42:7. What does each say about the faith of the one praying and the outcome?

Action items

1. Read Mark 5:23, 5:35, and 5:36 in their place, then James 1:6-8, then Job 1:1, 1:5, 1:8, 2:3, 3:25, and 42:7 in one sitting. Write two short paragraphs: what Jairus was told to do with his fear, and what the book of Job says about why Job's children died. Add one sentence on whether the two fit together as the chapter says they do.

2. Read Tertullian, Apology 39, the passage the chapter quotes ("See, they say, how they love one another"). Then host one meal this week with no screens, inviting someone from outside your household: a neighbor, a widow, a single parent, a student. Afterward write down one thing you learned about that person that you did not know, and whether the table did what the chapter says it does.

Leader's note: Expect the sharpest pushback on "if it is Your will" and on the filament, since some in the room will have been wounded by faith teaching. Make sure the group reads Luke 22:42 and the chapter's own caution on Job beside James 1:6-8 before deciding what the vision teaches and what it does not.

Chapter 25: Fulfilled Kingdom Theology

Summary

The chapter names the book's framework: it shares full preterism's timeline, names Gentry, Sproul, and Preston, and adds four points: continuing gifts, a growing kingdom, the divine council, the surviving rebel structure. It sets out two ages and aiōnios as life of the age (John 5:24; Matthew 25:46), lays seven exhibits on the ends of the ages (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 9:26), reads Revelation 20 with the thousand years as full measure, argues the resurrection is entered at death in a body suited to heaven (1 Corinthians 15:44; 2 Corinthians 5:1) against Wright and Ware, answers when God deals with sin (Hebrews 9:27), and rejects Dominionism and NAR.

Key passages: 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 9:26; Revelation 20:3; 1 Corinthians 15:44; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 9:27

Discussion questions

1. The chapter lays seven exhibits together, "the ends of the ages have come" in a perfect tense (1 Corinthians 10:11), "it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18), and asks whether any apostolic sentence places the end of the age after the fall of Jerusalem. The strongest counter-argument is Gentry's and Sproul's: granting the time texts, they hold Acts 1:11, Romans 8, and 1 Corinthians 15 as future, reading the last days as an era opened at the cross, "already and not yet," within a creed confessed for sixteen centuries. Read 1

Corinthians 10:11, Hebrews 10:25 and 10:37, James 5:8-9, and 1 John 2:18, noting each verb's tense. Can the era reading keep these words as written?

2. The chapter holds that since the court sat at AD 70 each believer enters the resurrection at death, in a soma pneumatikon suited to heaven (1 Corinthians 15:44; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Matthew 22:30); it concedes that the -ikos suffix means "animated by" and holds the location evidence unaffected. The strongest counter-argument is Wright's and Ware's: the same perishable body sown is raised, the "this" of 15:53-54 repeated four times, Paul sets the raising "at His coming" and "at the last trumpet" (15:23, 15:52) as one event, and Paul rebuked Hymenaeus for saying it had already happened (2 Timothy 2:17-18). Read 1 Corinthians 15:36-54, then 2 Corinthians 5:1-8. What continues, what changes, and where is the building from God?

3. The chapter answers the question that stops most readers: in a kingdom with no end (Luke 1:33), God dealt with sin at the cross (Hebrews 9:26), deals with it at every death (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:12), and is dealing with it by the kingdom's increase. The strongest counter-argument is Gentry's: without a final day God never finally reckons with sin; the creed confesses a coming to judge the quick and the dead; Paul told Athens of a day appointed (Acts 17:30-31); and "He must reign until" (1 Corinthians 15:25) names an unreached goal. Read Hebrews 9:26 and 9:27, Acts 17:30-31, Revelation 20:11-15, 21:25, 21:27, and 22:17. Is John's court one session or a standing one, and how do you know?

Action items

1. Make a chart of the seven exhibits as the chapter lays them out: Matthew 24:3 and 24:34; 1 Corinthians 10:11 with 7:29 and 7:31; Hebrews 3:9-10 and 3:17 with Psalm 95:10; Hebrews 1:2, 8:13, 9:26, 10:25, and 10:37; James 5:8-9 with 1 Peter 1:20, 4:7, and 4:17; 1 John 2:18 with Revelation 22:10; Daniel 12:7 and 9:26. In one column write the time word, in the other the tense as your translation gives it. Bring the chart.

2. Compare Matthew 25:46 and John 5:24 in the King James Version, the NASB, and Young's Literal Translation, which the chapter names for its rendering "age-during." Write one sentence on what changes when aiōnios is read as age language and one on what does not. Then look up aiōnios and aidios in a concordance and note the two places the chapter says aidios appears, Romans 1:20 and Jude 6.

Leader's note: This is the chapter where the group decides whether it can go where partial preterists stop, at the resurrection and the creed. Make sure the group reads 1 Corinthians 15:36-54 and 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 for itself, with the chapter's concession on the suffix in view, before weighing whether the body raised is the one in the ground.

Chapter 26: The Line in the Sand

Summary

The chapter is the book's call. The first-century church, with no lobby or platform, brought Rome to its knees within three centuries. It states the authority given and delegated (Matthew 28:18-19; Colossians 2:15; Luke 10:19; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5) and reads the armor of Ephesians 6:14-17 as equipment for advance, not for waiting. The author recounts his solitary attempt against a spirit over UCLA, builds no doctrine on what a demon says (Mark 5:9), lists the antichrist spirit's New Testament attributes (1 John 2:18, 2:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:4) for readers to test, honors the church's work as done "with one hand tied behind her back," and hands over to the testimony.

Key passages: Matthew 28:18-19; Colossians 2:15; Luke 10:19; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Ephesians 6:14-17; 1 John 2:18

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that all authority was given and delegated (Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 10:19), that the Ephesians 6:12 hierarchy was disarmed at the cross (Colossians 2:15), and that nothing waits on a future event; the only lack is awareness. The strongest counter-argument is that Matthew 28:18 is Christ's authority, given as a commission to make disciples, not a writ over institutions, that Luke 10:19 was spoken to the seventy, that Colossians 2:15 speaks of disarming and not of transfer, and that believers still facing these powers (Ephesians 6:12) look more like soldiers than a sheriff serving warrants. Read the four passages in context. What is given in each, to whom, for what task, and on what condition?

2. The chapter holds that territorial spirits hold thrones over regions and institutions, above all over higher learning; the author heard it in a deliverance session, builds no doctrine on it, tests it by Daniel 10 and Ephesians 6:12, and lists the spirit's attributes (1 John 2:18, 2:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). The strongest counter-argument is that Scripture never commands attacking territorial spirits, that Jesus' question to one demon (Mark 5:9) is no warrant for interrogation, that John's antichrists are people who left the church denying Christ, and that attributes broad enough to fit any institution prove nothing. Read 1 John 2:18, 2:22-23, and 4:5-6, then Mark 5:9. What does John say an antichrist is, and what test does he give?

3. The chapter honors the church's relief work as the kingdom in action, then says she has done it with one hand tied, because the deception told her her authority was future; the Westwood V.P.P., who left his family awaiting the rapture, is its human cost. The strongest counter-argument is that the record cuts the other way: two centuries of missions and mercy were driven by believers expecting Christ's return, one man's desertion indicts an application, not a doctrine, and churches holding fulfilled views have not visibly outperformed the rest. Read Ephesians 6:14-17 with 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. Does Paul describe equipment for holding ground or advancing, and what would change in your congregation if it believed the authority present?

Action items

1. Read Ephesians 6:14-17 in one sitting and make a chart with three columns: each piece of armor, what the chapter says it answers (deception, legal ground, fear, doubt, identity, argument), and the verse's own words. Then write one sentence on whether the passage, read on its own, describes a soldier waiting for extraction or a soldier moving.

2. Have a conversation this week with someone who holds a rapture expectation. Ask one question only, "What does your hope of Christ's return make you do this week?", and listen without rebutting. Write their answer in one sentence and bring it alongside your own answer to the chapter's closing question, what 160 million believers could accomplish with both hands free.

Leader's note: The pushback will come on territorial spirits and on the author's conversation with a demon during deliverance. Make sure the group reads 1 John 2:18 and 2:22-23 and Mark 5:9 for itself, with the chapter's own rule that no doctrine is built on what a demon says, before deciding what weight the UCLA account can bear.

Chapter 27: From the Tombs to the Throne

Summary

The closing chapter is testimony. Dominoes frame it: the Son came to destroy the devil's works (1 John 3:8), and they are still falling. The author tells of a coin tossed at eleven in an Italian piazza, years of addiction, Easter Sunday, and deliverance. He answers what he was commanding if Satan is in the lake of fire: the structure remains, under permissions (Luke 22:31-32; Revelation 20:3). He offers healings, two patents, a check, and the Playa del Rey tree; reads 1 Corinthians 15:23-28 on why suffering continues; separates demonic oppression from physical illness (Mark 9:29); and gives seven Monday practices and counsel for those whose churches disagree.

Key passages: 1 John 3:8; Matthew 12:28; Luke 22:31-32; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; James 1:2-4; Luke 10:19

Discussion questions

1. The chapter holds that the deliverance demonstrates the framework: Satan is in the lake of fire, his organization is not, it operates under permissions, as with Peter (Luke 22:31-32), the binding revoked one permission (Revelation 20:3), and satan is a common noun for adversary. The strongest counter-argument is that when the author commanded "Satan" and was released, the simplest reading is that Satan is loose, that a framework experience cannot tell from its opposite is in difficulty, and that Matthew 12:28 fits an inaugurated kingdom with the enemy still active. Read Matthew 12:28, Luke 22:31-32, and Revelation 20:3. Who acts in each, under what permission, and how should a group receive a testimony like this with honesty and care?

2. The chapter reads 1 Corinthians 15:23-28 as one argument: the death Paul means is the covenantal death through Adam, administered by the Law (15:56; 2 Corinthians 3:7), katargeō is the verb that ended the old covenant, tagma names ranks in order, and "Death is swallowed up" (15:54) came to pass at AD 70. The strongest counter-argument is the one the chapter says critics most often raise: the death that put Christ in a tomb will put the Corinthians in theirs, a "last enemy" abolished while people die is a conquest still ahead, and Isaiah 25:8 with Revelation 21:4 promises tears not yet dry. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20, 15:23-28, and 15:54-56. Which death is Paul discussing, and what would you say to a believer burying a child?

3. The chapter separates demonic oppression (fear, anger, addiction, trauma: Luke 8:26-39; Luke 9:37-42) from physical illness, so unhealed sickness is never proof of weak faith; it cites Paul's thorn, Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:27), and Elisha (2 Kings 13:14) against any single diagnostic, and reads suffering as formative (James 1:2-4). The strongest counter-argument is that the chapter's own stories blur its line, a knee and a tumor addressed much as a spirit was, that assigning anger, addiction, and trauma to spirits can bypass repentance, medicine, and counseling, and that the text gives no diagnostic between physician and command, as the chapter admits. Read Luke 8:26-39, Luke 9:37-42, and James 5:16. How does the text distinguish the cases, and who decides?

Action items

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15 in one sitting as the single argument the chapter says it is, marking verse 20, verse 23, verses 24 to 26, and verses 54 to 56. At each mark write one sentence saying which death Paul is discussing and how you know. Then look up katargeō in a

concordance in the places the chapter names, 2 Corinthians 3:7, 11, 13-14 and Romans 7:2, 6, and write what is rendered inoperative in each.

2. Have the conversation the chapter's "Navigating Your World" section describes: with one believer who disagrees with this book, a spouse, pastor, or small-group member, lead with no argument but one question, "Where have you seen God act in the last year?", and listen. Write their answer in one sentence, and one sentence on what from this chapter you could share with them as fruit rather than as a case.

Leader's note: Some in the room will have been hurt by deliverance or faith-healing teaching and others will doubt the testimony outright; keep both honest and both kind. Make sure the group reads 1 Corinthians 15:20, 15:23-28, and 15:54-56 for itself, and the chapter's distinction between oppression and illness, before deciding what "the last enemy" means for the person sitting beside them.

After the Last Chapter

A group that reaches Chapter 27 will have spent the better part of a year together, and the last meeting should not be another set of questions. Three things have served groups well at the end.

First, return to the two lists each member wrote at Chapter 1, what they had always believed Matthew 24 and Mark 13 describe and what they found the text to say. Ask each member to read their own two lists aloud and to say in one sentence what moved, what did not, and why. No one should be pressed to report a conversion. The Berean standard was never agreement; it was examination.

Second, read Appendix F together, the method, and ask the group to name one passage outside the book that they would now read differently, and to say which of the method's steps changed the reading. The book's aim, in its own words, is that the reader examine the evidence with the same rigor the book applied to it and reach their own conclusion. A group that can use the method without the author has received what the author meant to give.

Third, decide what the group will do. The book's last chapters are not about a view but about a village: a table, a porch, a father for the fatherless, elders brought home, a gathering where each one brings something, and a prayer offered with the authority the King delegated. Ask the group to choose one of those and to keep meeting around it after the study ends. The sheet that closes this guide, "What This Looks Like on Monday, or Any Given Day," is written to be handed out at that meeting and kept afterward. The book was written so that its readers would do something on Monday morning, and a study of it should end the same way.

For the Leader

A few practical notes.

Read the chapter and the key passages before the meeting, and read the leader's note last. The note tells you where the room will push, and knowing it beforehand lets you welcome the pushback instead of bracing against it.

Keep the text open. Most disagreements in these meetings are settled by reading the passage aloud, in two translations, with the verses before and after it. When a discussion drifts into what someone's pastor said or what a teacher on the radio said, the leader's job is to say, kindly, "Let's look at the verse."

Do not answer for the book. Where a counter-argument is strong, let it stand in the room until the group has tested it against the passage. The book's own standard applies to the group too: do not claim more for a chapter than the chapter claims for itself.

Watch for the wounded. Chapters 19, 24 and 27 touch prayer that was not answered, healing that did not come, and deliverance that some in the room may have been hurt by. The book itself says that unhealed sickness is never proof of weak faith and that no single diagnostic exists. Say that aloud before those discussions begin.

Honor the other views. Members who hold a futurist reading, or who are not sure what they hold, are the reason the counter-arguments are in this guide. They should leave every meeting knowing that their questions were taken seriously and answered from the text or left standing until they could be.

Finish. A group that stops at Chapter 15 has heard the case against a tradition and not the case for a kingdom. The second half of the book is where the first half goes to work, and a leader should plan from the first meeting for the group to reach the last.

What This Looks Like on Monday, or Any Given Day

A sheet to keep after the study ends. Every line rests on Chapters 22 to 27 of the book, and the chapter is given so you can go back to the page.

The short version first. If the kingdom is here and the authority has been handed over, then the believer stops waiting and starts working. From across the street that looks less like a movement and more like a good neighbor: someone who prays as if prayer does something, keeps a table open, knows the names on the block, and is patient with people who see things differently. The rest of this sheet walks through an ordinary day.

When you wake up. You are not in a waiting room. Nothing in your hope depends on tomorrow's headlines, and you don't need to read the news as a prophecy calendar. The question for the day is not "Is it time yet?" but "What has been given to me, and who needs it?" (Chapters 23 and 25.) If something in your past still has a hold on you, such as a vow spoken in anger, a pattern that runs through your family, or a door you opened without knowing it, renounce it by name in the authority of Jesus. Do it with a trusted prayer partner, not alone (Chapter 27, first practice).

At work. Pray for the coworker with the bad back. Pray for the broken machine. Start where you are, with small things, and step "to the edge of the limb" even though you might look foolish (Chapter 27, third practice). Where God has already shown His will, pray as someone sent, the way Peter spoke at the Beautiful Gate: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" (Acts 3:6, WEB). Where you do not know His will, pray the way Jesus did in the garden: "not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42, WEB). Telling those two situations apart is part of the work (Chapter 24).

When a thought arrives that seems to be from God. Test it. If it contradicts Scripture, it is not from God. If it brings fear instead of peace, test it further. If it pulls you toward isolation instead of community, slow down (Chapter 27, fourth practice). The serpent's four moves in Genesis 3 are a good check on any voice (Chapter 22).

When things go wrong. Some trouble is resistance, and you can name it and pray against it. Some trouble has natural causes, and the book says plainly that it often does (Chapter 27, sixth practice). Don't hunt for a spirit behind every flat tire. And never tell a sick person, or yourself, that being unhealed proves weak faith. The book calls that conclusion "circular, self-defeating reasoning" and says "it is not what the kingdom teaches." Paul's thorn, Epaphroditus, and Elisha's last illness are in Scripture for a reason (Chapter 27). Trials grow endurance (James 1:2-4), and suffering is not wasted.

In the neighborhood. Learn the names of everyone on your street, not just the people you already like. Bring cookies, ask one question, and listen to the answer. Start a group text for practical needs: a ladder, a ride, a power outage (Chapter 24).

At the table. Eat at least one meal a week with no screens. If there is no family in your home, invite someone: a single mother and her kids, a college student, the widow two doors down (Chapter 24). The table is where the village starts.

For the next generation. If you are a man, find a boy in your church who has no father. "You do not need a program; you need a Saturday morning" (Chapter 24). Learn a trade with your hands and pass it on. Treat the screen as a business built to capture a child's attention and set limits accordingly. If you can bring your aging parents home, consider it, and if you can't, the book says "there is no condemnation for those who cannot" (Chapter 24). Build for your grandchildren.

Chapter 23 asks the question a waiting theology quietly answers the wrong way: “why pour years into mentoring the next generation if the next week is the last one?”

When someone in the body is in trouble. Before handing the next crisis to a professional, ask whether the church can carry it first. That might mean shifts at a hospital bed, groceries for a man between jobs, or an older couple sitting with a younger one whose marriage is breaking (Chapter 24). Do none of this alone. Jesus sent the seventy in pairs (Chapter 27, fifth practice).

On Sunday. Come with something to give: “each one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation” (1 Corinthians 14:26, WEB; Chapter 22). If you lead, aim for “fewer spotlights and more dinner tables” (Chapter 24). Stay in your church unless it is actively hostile to the Holy Spirit. Be the leaven, and pray for your pastor (Chapter 27).

When someone disagrees with you. This will be most of the time, at first. “Lead with fruit, not arguments” (Chapter 27). The people in your pew who expect a rapture were taught it by people who loved them. Be sharp, if you must be, at a deception, and never at a brother or sister. Ask them what their hope makes them do this week, and listen (this guide, Chapter 26, second action item).

What this is not. It is not a takeover. The kingdom grows like yeast, seed and salt, “from the inside out, not from the top down” (Chapter 25), never by capturing politics. It is not a chain of command with modern apostles above you, because your authority comes from the King and not from a hierarchy (Chapter 25). It is not a war on people: the men behind the institutions Chapter 22 describes are “instruments and not the enemy,” and “our wrestling is not against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12, WEB; Chapter 22).

At the end of the day. Count the signposts: the prayer prayed, the meal shared, the boy taken fishing, the neighbor’s name learned. Some will show results and many won’t, and both are fine. Each one points to Jesus, and the dominoes are still falling (Chapter 27).