

Introduction to Chapter 7

The structure of the flood narrative in Gen 6–9 indicates that the main theme concerns why God preserved Noah, not why he sent the deluge (Gen 8:1).¹⁹¹¹ As a righteous and blameless person, Noah wholeheartedly committed himself to his relationship with the Lord (Gen 6:9).¹⁹¹² Thus, he would not suffer the destruction which would come upon the rest of humanity (Gen 6:13–14).¹⁹¹³

By filling the earth with violence (Gen 6:11),¹⁹¹⁴ rather than with people and animals (Gen 1:20–22, 26–28),¹⁹¹⁵ humanity had ruined the planet in God’s sight (Gen 6:11–12).¹⁹¹⁶ Since they had spoiled the earth by their sin, the Lord would complete its destruction. This is a textbook example of the punishment fitting the crime.¹⁹¹⁷

Humanity’s progressive degradation called for immediate action,¹⁹¹⁸ and God made an irrevocable decision.¹⁹¹⁹ However, the Lord informed Noah of his plan to destroy all that had been corrupted yet preserve a righteous remnant (Gen 6:14–18). This would include representatives of the creation that humanity was intended to steward (Gen 1:28; Gen 6:19–20).¹⁹²⁰ Unlike in other Ancient Near Eastern flood accounts, Noah’s salvation was neither an accident nor a thwarting of God’s plan.¹⁹²¹

As a result, the Lord specified how to build the ark rather than leaving the plan of escape to Noah’s imagination.¹⁹²² The instructions are quite brief, giving us minimal details (Gen 6:14–16).¹⁹²³ However, they are specific enough to imply that Noah was not a shipbuilder by trade.¹⁹²⁴ No rudders or sails are mentioned for Noah’s boat, indicating that it was never intended to be navigated. Noah’s fate was in God’s hands (Gen 7:16).¹⁹²⁵

Only after receiving construction plans did Noah learn why the Lord commanded him to build a gigantic boat. He planned to bring a flood of water to ruin all flesh which had breath (Gen 6:17).¹⁹²⁶ Every human and animal would perish. The breath (*ruach*) of life which the Lord had given, he would take away.¹⁹²⁷

Noah then discovered why God ordered him to build a boat which was far too large for him and his family.¹⁹²⁸ The Lord began by saying, “And I shall establish my covenant with you.” Even before the rain began, the Lord intended to provide for the continuation of human and

¹⁹¹¹Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 124.

¹⁹¹²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 133.

¹⁹¹³Walton, *Genesis*, 311.

¹⁹¹⁴Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 134.

¹⁹¹⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 171.

¹⁹¹⁶Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land, 2nd Ed.*, 134.

¹⁹¹⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 171–2.

¹⁹¹⁸Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 126.

¹⁹¹⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 172.

¹⁹²⁰Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 122.

¹⁹²¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 165.

¹⁹²²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 135.

¹⁹²³Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 172.

¹⁹²⁴Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 281.

¹⁹²⁵Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 135.

¹⁹²⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 174.

¹⁹²⁷Note that the Hebrew word *ruach* means both “breath” and “spirit/Spirit,” <https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/924/mode/2up>.

¹⁹²⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 175.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

animal life.¹⁹²⁹ By means of an ark, God would save the righteous seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) as well as representatives of the nonhuman creation (Gen 6:18–20).¹⁹³⁰

The Lord said, “And you shall enter the ark: you and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.” The Lord would preserve the family structure of humanity, extending salvation to Noah’s children.¹⁹³¹ Even today, those who have married can attest that a person does not marry one individual but into an entire family.

Noah was surely grateful that he and his sons would not have to find and capture two of every kind of animal.¹⁹³² Instead, the Lord would guide them to the ark. On the other hand, they did gather and store enough food to sustain them and the animals (Gen 6:21). The effort necessary to build and equip the ark had to be expensive and exhausting.

Yet, “Noah did according to all which God commanded him. Thus he did” (Gen 6:22). This brief statement provides insight into Noah’s character.¹⁹³³ It emphatically affirms Noah’s complete obedience. Noah succeeded where Adam had failed (Gen 2:16–17; Gen 3:6).¹⁹³⁴

By Twos and Sevens

1) Gen 7:1–4: Genesis 7 presumes the completion of the ark.¹⁹³⁵ One hundred years have passed since Moses first introduced Noah (Gen 5:32; Gen 7:6). However, it remains unclear whether Noah dedicated all that time to building the boat. This third scene of the flood narrative consists of the Lord’s instructions for entering the boat Noah constructed. In the extended chiasm structure of Gen 6:9–9:19, it corresponds to Gen 8:15–17, when God commanded him to disembark.¹⁹³⁶

Previously, Moses declared Noah’s righteousness (Gen 6:8–9, 22). For the first time, the Lord described Noah’s integrity.¹⁹³⁷ “And the Lord said to Noah, ‘Enter, you and all of your household, into the ark, because you I have seen [as] righteous before me in this generation.’” Noah expressed his faith by building and equipping the ark as God commanded (Gen 6:14–22).¹⁹³⁸ In contrast to wickedness and corruption wherever he looked (Gen 6:5, 12), here the Lord saw an upright person on the earth.¹⁹³⁹

In Gen 6:19–20, God informed Noah that a pair of each kind of animal would come to the ark.¹⁹⁴⁰ Now the Lord expanded that directive,¹⁹⁴¹ saying, “From all the clean animals, you shall take to yourself seven [pairs]. Seven males and their females. And from the animals which are not clean, [from] these two [pairs], males and their females. Also, from the birds of the heavens, seven [pairs]. Seven male and female, to preserve [their] seed on the face of the earth.”¹⁹⁴²

¹⁹²⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 284.

¹⁹³⁰Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 121.

¹⁹³¹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 136.

¹⁹³²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 284.

¹⁹³³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 285.

¹⁹³⁴Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 176.

¹⁹³⁵Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 287.

¹⁹³⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 176.

¹⁹³⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 286.

¹⁹³⁸Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 137.

¹⁹³⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 286.

¹⁹⁴⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 176.

¹⁹⁴¹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 137.

¹⁹⁴²The Hebrew text says “male and his female” for both clean and unclean animals. I have translated them as plurals for easier reading.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

“Clean” (*tahor*) usually refers to ritual purity.¹⁹⁴³ The most comprehensive lists of unclean animals appear in Lev 11 and Deut 14:3–20.¹⁹⁴⁴ Unclean birds tend to consume live prey or scavenge for dead animals.¹⁹⁴⁵ Not until after the flood receded would Noah understand the reason for the increased number of clean animals. First, Noah used a few birds to determine when everyone could leave the ark (Gen 8:6–12).¹⁹⁴⁶

After disembarking, he sacrificed clean animals, and God gave him permission to consume them. Therefore, Noah needed extra clean animals to repopulate the earth (Gen 8:17).¹⁹⁴⁷ However, the Lord saved even unclean animals from extinction.¹⁹⁴⁸ As with other aspects of Jewish ceremonial law, such as Sabbath observance and sacrificial offerings (Gen 2:1–3; Gen 4:3–4), the notion of ritual purity began long before God spoke to Moses.¹⁹⁴⁹ As a righteous man who walked with God, it appears that Noah understood this concept.¹⁹⁵⁰

In a parallel Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) text, Atrahasis brought “whatever he had...clean animals...fat animals...he caught [and brought on board]. The winged birds of the heavens, the cattle...the wild creatures...he put on board.”¹⁹⁵¹

After decades of Noah’s preparation, at last the foretold time arrived. The Lord said, “After seven days, I am sending rain on the earth [for] forty days and forty nights. And I shall wipe out all that subsists which I have made from the face of the ground.” Biblical Hebrew features fifteen different words which refer to rain. The one used here (*matar*), is the most common. It points to regular rainfall in terms of its strength (Job 38:26–27; Isa 30:23).¹⁹⁵² However, in this case, it differed in duration.¹⁹⁵³

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Noah figure Utnapishtim explained: “[On the sev]enth [day] the ship was completed...Six days and [six] nights blows the flood wind, as the south-storm sweeps the land. When the seventh day arrived, the flood (-carrying) south-storm subsided in the battle, which it had fought like an army. The sea grew quiet, the tempest was still, the flood ceased. I looked at the weather: stillness had set in.”¹⁹⁵⁴

In that ANE account, Utnapishtim’s craftsmen built the enormous boat in seven days, a period equivalent to the duration of the flood. Given the scale of these monumental events, the amounts of time denoted in Genesis appear more realistic.¹⁹⁵⁵

a) Read Gen 7:1–4. Why did God see Noah as righteous? What made seven pairs of each kind of clean animal necessary? How was this rain different from a typical storm? What would be the result?

¹⁹⁴³H. Ringgren, “טָהוֹר” (*tahor*), *TDNT* 5:287–96, 291.

¹⁹⁴⁴Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 138.

¹⁹⁴⁵Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New Haven and London: Doubleday, 1991), 662.

¹⁹⁴⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 176.

¹⁹⁴⁷Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 7:4.

¹⁹⁴⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 287–8.

¹⁹⁴⁹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 138.

¹⁹⁵⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 177.

¹⁹⁵¹Lambert and Millard, “Epic of Atra-Khasis,” in *RANE*, 29.

¹⁹⁵²H. J. Zobel, “מָטָר” (*matar*), *TDOT* 8:250–65, 250–1.

¹⁹⁵³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 288.

¹⁹⁵⁴Speiser, “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *ANET*, 11:76, 127–32, 94,

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up.

¹⁹⁵⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 177.

A Reversal of Creation

b) Gen 7:5–16: This section comprises the fourth scene of the flood narrative. It describes Noah’s obedience, the passengers’ entrance into the ark, and the beginning of the flood.¹⁹⁵⁶ As with Gen 1, Moses used several literary devices. This indicates that he had either received a poem-like version of the flood story or that he added lyrical embellishments to the narrative account.¹⁹⁵⁷ As a result, this scene consists of poetic narrative, full of tension and emotion.¹⁹⁵⁸

Moses condensed all of Noah’s difficult work into this brief statement, “And Noah did according to all which the Lord had commanded him” (Gen 6:14–7:3). However, some details appear in Gen 7:6–9,¹⁹⁵⁹ such as the date of the flood’s beginning, Noah’s age, who occupied the ark, and how much time Noah had to fill it.¹⁹⁶⁰ Noah did what the Lord commanded, and God did what he promised. Both proved faithful to fulfill what the Lord said should occur.¹⁹⁶¹

Throughout Gen 7:6–16a, Moses employed extended parallelism. After briefly describing what took place in Gen 7:6–9, he returned to the same topics with greater detail.¹⁹⁶² In this case, Gen 7:6a matches Gen 7:11a; Gen 7:6b parallels Gen 7:11b–12; Gen 7:7 goes with Gen 7:13; Gen 7:8 correlates with Gen 7:14; and Gen 7:9a is like Gen 7:15–16a.¹⁹⁶³ By repeating the same information with increasing precision, Moses heightened the tension of the narrative.¹⁹⁶⁴ We shall focus upon the more detailed verses.

Moses began Gen 7:10 by writing, “And it happened after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.” The Lord had promised this seven-day period in Gen 7:4.¹⁹⁶⁵ This verse begins a small chiasm within the extended reverse parallelism of the flood account (Gen 6:9–9:19):

- A 7 days (time before flood after God commands Noah to enter the ark, Gen 7:10)
- B 40 days (raining on the earth, Gen 7:12, 17)
- C 150 days (waters prevail, Gen 7:24; Gen 8:3)
- Á 40 days (Noah lifts the ark’s cover after landing on Ararat, Gen 8:6)
- Á 7 days (Noah dispatches a second dove, Gen 8:10, 12)¹⁹⁶⁶

Moses reported an amazingly precise date.¹⁹⁶⁷ He wrote, “In the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on this very day all of the springs of the great deep were broken open, and the windows of the heavens were opened.”

By including an exact date—which typically occurs in the Ancient Near East (ANE) only in the annals of kings—Moses imbued the account with historical credibility.¹⁹⁶⁸ Using the Hebrew calendar based upon the lunar cycle, the total length of time Noah spent on the ark totals

¹⁹⁵⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 177.

¹⁹⁵⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 291.

¹⁹⁵⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 181.

¹⁹⁵⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 288.

¹⁹⁶⁰Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 138.

¹⁹⁶¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 289.

¹⁹⁶²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 291.

¹⁹⁶³Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 177.

¹⁹⁶⁴Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 138.

¹⁹⁶⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 179.

¹⁹⁶⁶Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 289–90.

¹⁹⁶⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 179.

¹⁹⁶⁸Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

twelve months and eleven days (Gen 8:13–14).¹⁹⁶⁹ However, a lunar year lasts eleven days less than the time it takes for the earth to completely orbit the sun. Based upon our reckoning, the flood lasted exactly one year.¹⁹⁷⁰

Moses named two sources of flooding. A massive eruption occurred due to the land over a subterranean ocean bursting open, and a tremendous downpour fell from above.¹⁹⁷¹ Both “springs (*mayin*) of the great (*rav*) deep (*tehom*)” and “windows (*arubah*) of the heavens (*shamay*)” appear in other poetic biblical accounts (Ps 78:15–16; Mal 3:10).¹⁹⁷² This portrayal of underground springs conforms to the ANE view of land sitting upon subterranean waters (Gen 2:10; Ps 24:1–2).¹⁹⁷³

They gushed forth when God cleaved the springs open in a sudden explosion.¹⁹⁷⁴ By releasing these waters, the Lord returned the earth to its original chaos (Gen 1:2).¹⁹⁷⁵ Approximately 9,300 years ago, the Mediterranean broke through the Bosphorus into a shrinking freshwater lakebed, creating an enormous waterfall and deep erosion into one section of what is now the Black Sea. This resulted in cataclysmic flooding.¹⁹⁷⁶

Just as we describe the “setting of the sun,” “the windows of the heavens were opened” does not depict scientific language.¹⁹⁷⁷ The only other usage of the term “window of heaven” in the ANE occurs in an account of Baal erecting his home.¹⁹⁷⁸ It says, “He opens a casement in the house, a window within the pa[lace]. Baal op[ens] *rifts in* [the cloud]s. Ba[al gives] forth his holy voice, Baal discharges the *ut[erance of his li]ps*. His h[oly] voice [convulses] the earth...the mountains quake.”¹⁹⁷⁹

The language in Gen 7 regarding the two sources of water alludes to the imagery of Gen 1:6–7.¹⁹⁸⁰ God was undoing his great act of separating the waters above from the waters below the earth.¹⁹⁸¹ Israel’s prophets alluded to the reversal of creation as an act of judgment (Isa 24:17–21; Jer 4:23–26; Amos 7:4–6).¹⁹⁸²

Moses’s original audience would have recalled this cosmic scene from Enuma Elish in which the god Marduk split the remains of the evil water goddess Tiamat:¹⁹⁸³ “When the lord [Marduk] paused to view her dead body that he might divide the monster and do

¹⁹⁶⁹Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 7:11.

¹⁹⁷⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 179.

¹⁹⁷¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 291.

¹⁹⁷²Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 181.

¹⁹⁷³Walton, *Genesis*, 126.

¹⁹⁷⁴Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 292.

¹⁹⁷⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 181.

¹⁹⁷⁶Yanchilina et. al., “Compilation of Geophysical, Geochronological, and Geochemical Evidence Indicates a Rapid Mediterranean-Derived Submergence of the Black Sea’s Shelf and Subsequent Substantial Salinification in the Early Holocene,” *Marine Geology* 1, no. 383 (1January 2017): 14–34, 32, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025322716302961>.

¹⁹⁷⁷Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 7:11.

¹⁹⁷⁸Matthews, Chavalas, and Walton, *IVPBBCOT*, Gen 7:11.

¹⁹⁷⁹Ginsberg, “Poems About Baal and Anath,” in *ANET*, 7:26–31, 135, https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n159/mode/2up. Italics original.

¹⁹⁸⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 291.

¹⁹⁸¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 181.

¹⁹⁸²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

¹⁹⁸³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 292.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

artful works. He split her like a shellfish into two parts: half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky, pulled down the bar and posted guards. He bade them to allow not her waters to escape.”¹⁹⁸⁴

The flood which Noah experienced reversed the creation order. The waters above and below acted as the Lord commanded. By his word, God can control or release them (Isa 51:9–10; Ps 74:13–15).¹⁹⁸⁵ Moses reported, “And the downpour [fell] on the earth forty days and forty nights.” Unlike the general word for rain (*matar*) in Gen 7:4, the term used here (*geshem*) refers to heavy showers or a deluge (Job 37:5–6; Ezra 10:9; Zech 10:1).¹⁹⁸⁶ Torrential rains fell upon the earth.¹⁹⁸⁷

However, Moses’s emphasis lies upon the salvation of those inside the ark, rather than upon those who did not seek refuge there.¹⁹⁸⁸ He again described the entry of the passengers into the boat but with greater details, conferring a majestic tone to the account.¹⁹⁸⁹ Just as with the logistics of building the ark, Moses omitted the specific aspects of this embarkation.¹⁹⁹⁰

The text conveys that Noah and his family served as grand marshals of this parade, with various types of animals proceeding behind them.¹⁹⁹¹ Disney’s decision to animate this scene to the tune of Elgar’s “Pomp and Circumstance” in *Fantasia 2000* seems fitting.¹⁹⁹²

Moses wrote, “On that very same day, Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, them and all of the living things according to their kinds. And every animal according to its kind, and every creeping thing which creeps upon the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every wing.” The phrase “on that very same day” signifies a memorable event (Gen 17:23; Exod 12:41; Deut 32:48–50).¹⁹⁹³

That Moses mentioned Noah’s sons before his wife and cited none of the women by name reflects the patriarchal emphasis of ANE cultures.¹⁹⁹⁴ Designating the younger women as “the three wives of his sons” indicates that they comprised a separate group within the family.¹⁹⁹⁵ Evidently, none of the younger couples had produced children by this time.¹⁹⁹⁶

Moses continued, “And they entered into the ark to Noah, two [by] two from all flesh in which [was] the breath of life. Those that went in, male and female of all flesh, entered as God commanded him.” Much like the Lord brought the animals to Adam to name them, so God led creatures to Noah to preserve them (Gen 2:19).¹⁹⁹⁷

Earlier, the Lord had announced that he would “destroy all flesh in which was the breath of life” (Gen 6:17). Now, he exempted a remnant from imminent extermination.¹⁹⁹⁸ In fact, God

¹⁹⁸⁴Speiser, “Enuma Elish (The Creation Epic),” 4:135–40, 67, https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n91/mode/2up.

¹⁹⁸⁵Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 293.

¹⁹⁸⁶H. J. Zobel, “מָטָר” (*matar, geshem*), *TDOT* 8:250–65, 251.

¹⁹⁸⁷Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 293.

¹⁹⁸⁸Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 126.

¹⁹⁸⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 181.

¹⁹⁹⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 293–4.

¹⁹⁹¹Waltke, and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 138–9.

¹⁹⁹²The video clip is available online.

¹⁹⁹³Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

¹⁹⁹⁴Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 293.

¹⁹⁹⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

¹⁹⁹⁶Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 293.

¹⁹⁹⁷Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

¹⁹⁹⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 294.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

invisibly guided this great procession of male and female animals to protection.¹⁹⁹⁹ Moses did not mention the seven pairs of clean creatures and birds here. However, everyone whom the Lord designated entered the ark (Gen 7:2–3, 16).²⁰⁰⁰

This section ends on a dramatic note, saying, “And the Lord shut him in.” God’s act of sealing Noah and those with him into the ark emphasizes divine protection (Job 38:8–11).²⁰⁰¹ While the storm raged around them, the one who shut them in guaranteed their safety.²⁰⁰²

Other ANE flood heroes had very different experiences.²⁰⁰³ In the Epic of Gilgamesh, Utnapishtim said, “I watched the appearance of the weather. The weather was awesome to behold. I boarded the ship and battened up the entrance.”²⁰⁰⁴ According to the Atrahasis Epic, “The appearance of the weather changed. [The god] Adad roared in the clouds. As soon as [Atrahasis] heard Adad’s voice, pitch was brought to him to close the door. After he had bolted the door, Adad was roaring in the clouds. The winds became savage as he arose. He severed the mooring line and set the boat adrift.”²⁰⁰⁵ Unlike those great heroes, God’s favor saved Noah and his entourage (Gen 6:8).²⁰⁰⁶

Read Gen 7:5–16. What is the significance of Moses listing the exact date when the flood began? How was God reversing creation? Why is the fact that God shut the door important? How does that encourage you?

Not Knowing the Day or the Hour

2) Matt 24:36–39: During the time of Christ, Jewish scholars debated) whether they could predict the onset of the age to come.²⁰⁰⁷ While some asserted that no one could know,²⁰⁰⁸ the Pharisees believed the messiah would come to usher in the kingdom of God only when each of the Israelites kept themselves from sin.²⁰⁰⁹ Consequently, Jesus’s disregard for ritual purity on the Sabbath enraged them (Matt 12:1–2).

According to one early Jewish text, the Lord said, “Though I have set a limit to ‘the end,’ that it will happen in its time regardless of whether they will do repentance or not...the Messiah will come if they keep just one Sabbath, because the Sabbath is equivalent to all the law” (Shemot Rabbah 25:12; Yerushalmi, Ta’anit 1:10).²⁰¹⁰

¹⁹⁹⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

²⁰⁰⁰Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 179.

²⁰⁰¹Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, 226.

²⁰⁰²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

²⁰⁰³Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

²⁰⁰⁴Speiser, “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” *ANET*, 11:91–3, 94.

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n119/mode/2up.

²⁰⁰⁵Lambert and Millard, “Epic of Atrahasis,” *RANE*, 29.

²⁰⁰⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

²⁰⁰⁷*Babylonian Talmud*, Sanhedrin 97a-99a, <http://halakhah.com/pdf/nezikin/Sanhedrin.pdf>.

²⁰⁰⁸Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Matt 24:36.

²⁰⁰⁹Albrecht Oepke, “παρουσία” (*parousia*), *TDNT* 5:858–71, 864.

²⁰¹⁰J. Immanuel Schochet, “Hastening the Coming of Mashiach,” note 5.

http://www.chabad.org/library/moshiach/article_cdo/aid/101681/jewish/Hastening-Mashiach.htm#footnote5a101681.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

Yet, the *Babylonian Talmud* states:

“Our rabbis taught: ‘Seven things are hidden from men. These are they: the day of death, and the day of comfort, the [extent] of judgment; and a man does not know what is in his neighbor's heart; and a man does not know from what he will earn; and when the Davidic dynasty will return; and when the wicked kingdom will come to an end.’”²⁰¹¹

Meanwhile, the Essenes of Qumran looked forward to the day when everyone would understand the meaning of the law and obey it perfectly. At that time, they believed the illegitimate high priests in power since the Maccabean Rebellion would be conquered and the rightful heir of David would emerge. They would join the messiah to overthrow demons and human enemies, ushering in God's kingdom.²⁰¹²

Earlier in this chapter, Christ discussed at length which signs do not indicate that he will return soon (Matt 24:1–28). Instead, they refer primarily to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.²⁰¹³ However, he gave one exception, saying, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to the whole inhabited world as a witness to the people groups, and then the end shall come” (Matt 24:14).²⁰¹⁴ Therefore, our proclamation of the gospel shall hasten the return of Christ. Likewise, failure to share Jesus with others will delay his coming (2 Pet 3:9).²⁰¹⁵

Since Jesus returned to heaven (Acts 1:1–2, 9–11), the world has continually experienced evil and suffering. That fact has caused some believers throughout church history to speculate concerning an imminent return of Christ.²⁰¹⁶ Every generation eagerly awaits the cosmic signs of the end of this age (Matt 24:29–31).²⁰¹⁷

In response to the disciples' question in Matt 24:1–3, Jesus finally gave a direct answer.²⁰¹⁸ He said, “But concerning that day and hour, no one knows, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.” Frequently, the term “day” (*hēmera*) connotes the final judgment (Matt 7:21–23; Luke 10:12; 2 Tim 1:12).²⁰¹⁹ However, in this instance, the sense of “day and hour” simply refers to an amount of time.²⁰²⁰ Therefore, Christ asserted that we cannot determine the month or even the year of his return.²⁰²¹

The Lord often keeps angels unaware of his plans. Despite their superhuman abilities, God limits their knowledge (1 Pet 1:10–12).²⁰²² He restricts what they know and what they can do (Ps 91:11; Ps 103:19–21; Heb 1:5–7, 13–14).²⁰²³ On the other hand, it is astounding that Jesus—the central figure on the day of his return—did not know when that will occur.²⁰²⁴ Upon taking on flesh, Christ refused to utilize the attributes of God so he could fully experience

²⁰¹¹ *Babylonian Talmud*, Pesachim 54b, <http://halakhah.com/pdf/moed/Pesachim.pdf>.

²⁰¹² Marius De Jonge, “Messiah.” *ABD* 4:777–88, 783.

²⁰¹³ Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 88.

²⁰¹⁴ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (vol. 11 of *New Studies in Biblical Theology*; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 99.

²⁰¹⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 344.

²⁰¹⁶ Donald G. Bloesch, *The Last Things: Resurrection, Judgment, Glory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 75.

²⁰¹⁷ Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 716.

²⁰¹⁸ Wilkins, *Matthew*, 799.

²⁰¹⁹ Gerhard von Rad and Gerhard Delling, “ἡμέρα” (*hēmera*), *TDNT* 2:943–53, 952.

²⁰²⁰ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ώρα” (*hōra*), *BDAG* 1102–3, 1102.

²⁰²¹ Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 716.

²⁰²² Wilkins, *Matthew*, 800.

²⁰²³ Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd Ed.*, 411.

²⁰²⁴ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 939.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

humanity (Phil 2:5–7).²⁰²⁵ While living on earth, Jesus often set aside his omniscience.²⁰²⁶ He used his divine prerogatives only when the Father willed that he do so through the power of the Spirit (John 1:47–51; John 4:15–19).²⁰²⁷

Before becoming human, the Son of God possessed all the characteristics of God,²⁰²⁸ including his sovereign divine majesty (Phil 2:6–8).²⁰²⁹ Christ was equal to the Father in cosmic authority while in his pre-incarnate state. Rather than conveying that “equality with God” was something Jesus desired which he did not have, such parity was always his.²⁰³⁰

The Greek term *perichoresis* best captures the essence of the Trinity: as in a perfectly choreographed dance, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so interpenetrate one another that their wills are unified.²⁰³¹ Where there is one, so are the other two, without any one being greater than the others.²⁰³² As Augustine (354–430) stated, “Believe then that the Son is equal with the Father... For if he be not equal, he is not a true Son.”²⁰³³

A review of Philip Schaff’s massive work *The Creeds of Christendom* reveals that the currently popular notion that Christ was subordinate to the Father by obeying him prior to his birth does not appear. In fact, those few creeds in which any mention of subordination appears vigorously condemned it.²⁰³⁴

Contrary to what one would expect of a sovereign Lord, Jesus did not regard his equality with God as a right to be utilized.²⁰³⁵ To become incarnate, the Son “emptied himself” of what would have prevented him from becoming fully human.²⁰³⁶ This involved divesting himself of his divine privileges and prestige.²⁰³⁷ However, the metaphor does not convey a loss of divine attributes. That he “emptied himself” poetically states that Christ poured himself out completely for the benefit of others, becoming poor that he might make many rich (2 Cor 8:9).²⁰³⁸

Although in every way equal to the Father and the Spirit, while Jesus lived on earth, he voluntarily divested himself of those rights (John 17:1–5, 20–26).²⁰³⁹

The world’s fastest sprinter joining you in a three-legged race provides a good analogy of the Incarnation. Jesus remained fully God but became functionally limited in his abilities while in his earthly body.²⁰⁴⁰ In Christ we see God living a fully human life,²⁰⁴¹ in addition to a person living in complete reliance upon the Father and the Spirit (John 11:40–44; Luke 4:1).²⁰⁴²

²⁰²⁵Wilkins, *Matthew*, 800.

²⁰²⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 716.

²⁰²⁷Wilkins, *Matthew*, 800.

²⁰²⁸Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 114.

²⁰²⁹Behm, “μορφή” (*morphē*), *TNDT* 4:751.

²⁰³⁰Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 207–8.

²⁰³¹Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 113.

²⁰³²William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology, 3rd Ed.* (ed. Alan W. Gomes; Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 250.

²⁰³³Augustine, “Sermon 140,” in *Sermons (131–140) on Selected Lessons of the New Testament (NPNF2)* (ed. Philip Schaff; trans. R. G. MacMullen; Edinburgh: Eerdmans, 1867), 5.

²⁰³⁴Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, 3 Vols.* (rev David S. Schaff; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1931), <https://archive.org/stream/creedsofchriste01scha#page/n7/mode/2up>.

²⁰³⁵Werner Foerster, “αρπαγμος” (*harpagmos*), *TNDT* 1:473–4, 474.

²⁰³⁶Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 145.

²⁰³⁷Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “κενόω” (*kenōō*), *BDAG*, 539.

²⁰³⁸Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 117.

²⁰³⁹Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 115.

²⁰⁴⁰Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd Ed.*, 670–1.

²⁰⁴¹Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 213.

²⁰⁴²Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd Ed.*, 658.

During Christ's time on earth, the Father did not want him to know the date of his triumphant return.²⁰⁴³ However, in our era, Jesus sits upon his glorious throne (Acts 2:32–36; Acts 7:55–56; Rom 8:33–34). He shall be the one to judge all people (Matt 16:27; Matt 25:31–46; Phil 2:9–11).²⁰⁴⁴

After his resurrection, the disciples asked if Jesus would restore the kingdom of God at that time. He responded that the Father had determined when that would be. It was not for them “to know the time or period of time which the Father has set by his own authority” (Acts 1:6–7).²⁰⁴⁵ Notably, Christ did not say that he remained ignorant; only that we should.

Jesus then told three parables as illustrations. In the first, his return is completely unexpected, in the second, he comes back sooner than anticipated (Matt 24:45–51), and in the third, he arrives later than people predicted (Matt 25:1–13).²⁰⁴⁶ Since we cannot know the day of his return, we must remain ever vigilant.²⁰⁴⁷

a) Read Matt 24:36. Why didn't Jesus know the time of his return? Do you think he does now? Why or why not?

As in the Days of Noah

b) Matt 24:37–39: Jesus continued, explaining to his disciples, “For even as in the days of Noah, so shall be the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man.” Most people will ignore the signs and warnings of impending judgment. Yet—as with the flood—it shall affect everyone and everything on earth.²⁰⁴⁸

Parousia is a technical term for “the imminent coming of the exalted Lord in Messianic glory.”²⁰⁴⁹ Within the gospels, it occurs only in Matthew.²⁰⁵⁰ This appears to derive from Greek classical literature, with 255 occurrences. In contrast, *parousia* occurs only four times in the Greek Old Testament, all in apocryphal books (e.g. Judith 10:18; 2 Macc 8:12–13).²⁰⁵¹ Greco-Roman usage of “*parousia*” referred primarily to the arrival of a hidden deity who made its presence known by a revelation of power.²⁰⁵²

For example, Diodorus Siculus (first century BC) wrote: “After he had secured the throne, he instituted the initiatory rites of [the goddess] Demeter... transferring their ritual from Egypt. And the tradition that an *advent* of the goddess into Attica also took place at that time is reasonable, since it was then that the fruits which are named after her were brought to Athens, and this is why it was thought that the discovery of the seed had been made again, as though Demeter had bestowed the gift. And the Athenians on their part

²⁰⁴³Wilkins, *Matthew*, 800.

²⁰⁴⁴France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 939.

²⁰⁴⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 716.

²⁰⁴⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 718.

²⁰⁴⁷Wilkins, *Matthew*, 800.

²⁰⁴⁸France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 940.

²⁰⁴⁹Oepke, “παρουσία” (*parousia*), *TDNT* 5:858–71, 865.

²⁰⁵⁰Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 719.

²⁰⁵¹Result of Logos 7 word study on “παρουσία” (*parousia*).

²⁰⁵²Arndt, Danker and Bauer, “παρουσία” (*parousia*), *BDAG*, 780–1.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

agree that it was...when a lack of rain had wiped out the crops, that Demeter came to them with the gift of grain.”²⁰⁵³

Eventually, “*parousia*” also could describe the visit of a high-ranking person, such as a king or emperor.²⁰⁵⁴ Polybius, a Roman historian (ca. 200–117 BC), recorded this event: “Cornelius with his colleagues went to king Philip. They met him near Tempe, and after speaking with him on the other matters about which they had instructions, they advised him to send an embassy to Rome, to ask for an alliance, in order to [deter] all suspicion of being...in expectation of the *arrival* of Antiochus.”²⁰⁵⁵

Since the time of Christ’s return remains unknown, many people will neglect to prepare.²⁰⁵⁶ Just as the flood overtook people who remained unaware of their peril, the Son of Man shall suddenly arrive without warning to render judgment (Dan 7:13–14).²⁰⁵⁷ In the days of Noah, only those who prepared in advance survived: everyone else perished (Matt 25:1–13).²⁰⁵⁸

“For as it was in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark.” The people of Noah’s era engaged in the normal activities of life.²⁰⁵⁹ Their affairs so consumed them that they failed to recognize spiritual realities.²⁰⁶⁰ Christ continued, “They did not understand until the flood came and swept them all away. In this manner shall be the coming of the Son of Man.”

Noah’s contemporaries lived in ignorance of their precarious state until judgment fell upon them.²⁰⁶¹ In the same way, spiritually unprepared people who live at the time of Christ’s return shall not escape (1 Thess 5:1–6).²⁰⁶²

Read Matt 24:37–39. How does the meaning of “*parousia*” affect the way you view Christ’s return? What made Noah and his contemporaries a particularly apt illustration? Why does this parable add a sense of urgency to your call to share the gospel?

²⁰⁵³Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, 1.29.3, 96,
[Http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/1A*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/1A*.html).

²⁰⁵⁴Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*παρουσία*” (*parousia*), *BDAG*, 780–1.

²⁰⁵⁵Polybius, *Histories* (trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh; London. New York: MacMillan, 1889), 18.48.4,
[Http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0234%3Abook%3D18%3Achapter%3D48](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0234%3Abook%3D18%3Achapter%3D48).

²⁰⁵⁶France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 940.

²⁰⁵⁷Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 591.

²⁰⁵⁸France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 940.

²⁰⁵⁹Osborne, *Matthew*, 904.

²⁰⁶⁰Wilkins, *Matthew*, 801.

²⁰⁶¹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 719.

²⁰⁶²Wilkins, *Matthew*, 801.

One Will Be Left

c) **Matt 24:40–41:** Jesus continued to teach his disciples about the necessity of faithful living,²⁰⁶³ employing two illustrations based upon life in Israel.²⁰⁶⁴ The first parable says, “At that time, two men were in the field. One was taken (*paralambanō*) and one was left (*aphiēmi*). Two women were grinding grain with a hand mill. One was taken and one was left.”

Men routinely worked in a field and women ground grain, without any sense of threat.²⁰⁶⁵ In fact, women in small households considered milling flour a form of drudgery.²⁰⁶⁶ Families typically shared a courtyard and large grinding stones with their neighbors, who might have been relatives.²⁰⁶⁷ Just as a lit lamp indicated the presence of someone at home in the evening, so the sound of millstones revealed the presence of a woman (Jer 25:10–11; Rev 18:21–23). Grinding comprised a daily chore.²⁰⁶⁸

The Mishnah regulated this activity:

“One woman may lend to another who is suspected [not to observe properly the laws] of the Sabbatical year, a flour-sieve, a winnow, a handmill, and a stove, but she may not assist her to winnow or to grind. The wife of [one learned in, and observant of, the law] may lend to the wife of an unlearned person, a flour-sieve or a winnow, and may aid her to winnow, to grind, or to sift; but as soon as water is poured over the flour, she may not further assist her, for those who transgress the law are not to be aided in their transgressions (*m. Gittim* 5.9).

Women of varying religious commitments could grind grain together. In Jesus’s scenario, one of the two had prepared spiritually while the other had not. No middle ground exists (Matt 10:34–39).²⁰⁶⁹ At some future time, people will go about their daily routines when—without warning—God will take some while leaving others. This raises intriguing questions. What determines who the Lord takes?²⁰⁷⁰ Is being taken a good or a bad thing?

Paralambanō means “to take with oneself,” usually in close fellowship (Matt 2:13; Matt 17:1; John 14:3).²⁰⁷¹ On the other hand, it can have the nuance of “take into custody” or “remove forcibly” (John 19:17–18).²⁰⁷² Regarding the word “left” (*aphiēmi*), we can translate it as “to let go,” “to abandon,” “to divorce,” “to leave standing,” and even “to forgive” or “release from moral obligation” (Matt 4:11, 22; 1 Cor 7:12; Matt 5:23–24; Matt 12:32).²⁰⁷³ As a result, neither the context nor the meaning of this pair of verbs produces a conclusive answer. The answers hinge upon whether the verbs “swept away” (*airō*) (v. 39) and “taken away” (*paralambanō*) in Matt 24:39–40 have the same meaning.²⁰⁷⁴

Consequently, New Testament scholars remain divided regarding who will be taken and who will be left. Some assert that angels shall gather God’s people while leaving others on earth to face judgment (Matt 24:31).²⁰⁷⁵ They make a comparison with Noah and his family being

²⁰⁶³Blomberg, “Matthew,” In *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 88.

²⁰⁶⁴Wilkins, *Matthew*, 801.

²⁰⁶⁵France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 940.

²⁰⁶⁶Karel Van der Toorn, “Mill, Millstone,” *ABD* 4:831–2, 831.

²⁰⁶⁷Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 591.

²⁰⁶⁸Van der Toorn, “Mill, Millstone,” *ABD* 4:831.

²⁰⁶⁹Wilkins, *Matthew*, 801.

²⁰⁷⁰France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 941.

²⁰⁷¹Gerhard Dellling, “παραλαμβάνω” (*paralambanō*), *TDNT* 4:11–14, 13.

²⁰⁷²Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “παραλαμβάνω” (*paralambanō*), *BDAG*, 767–8.

²⁰⁷³Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “ἀφίημι” (*aphiēmi*), 156–7.

²⁰⁷⁴Osborne, *Matthew*, 905.

²⁰⁷⁵Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 720.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

gathered into the ark while those left outside perished.²⁰⁷⁶ Other experts note that the nineteenth century concept of believers being taken into heaven prior to judgment falling upon the earth rests upon shaky theological ground.²⁰⁷⁷ In fact, a recent survey of Protestant pastors has revealed that only one-third endorse a pre-tribulation rapture.²⁰⁷⁸

The crucial text for those who believe that Christians shall avoid the tribulation to come is 2 Thess 2:1–7. They view “the one who restrains” (*katechō*) in v. 7 as the Holy Spirit within believers, a notion which some prominent commentators deride.²⁰⁷⁹ Many scholars assert that Paul omitted the identity of the restrainer because the Christians in Thessalonica knew who it was.²⁰⁸⁰ Thus, any attempt to name that person or force consists of speculation.²⁰⁸¹ John Chrysostom (ca. 349–407) asserted, “If [Paul] meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly.”²⁰⁸²

Other Scriptures teach that Christians who are still alive will rise to meet the Lord when he returns at the end of this age (Matt 24:27–31; 1 Cor 15:50–52; 2 Thess 1:3–10; 1 Pet 4:12–19).²⁰⁸³ All of creation eagerly anticipates that day (Rom 8:16–22).

Several usages of “*paralambanō*” in the Greek Old Testament also carry the nuance of being forcibly removed (Jer 49:2; Lam 3:2). Matthew chose this word to describe how the Roman soldiers took Jesus away to torture and mock him (Matt 27:27). Taking people away into judgment fits with the threat rendered by the Roman army when they destroyed the temple (Matt 24:15–22).²⁰⁸⁴ It also meshes with the flood taking the wicked away (Matt 24:39).²⁰⁸⁵

Finally, the parallel passage in Luke gives the impression that those left behind face judgment (Luke 17:34–37).²⁰⁸⁶ Earlier in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus delivered several parables about the judgment to come. The tale in Matt 13:24–30 and its interpretation in Matt 13:36–43 illustrate the destruction of the wicked, leaving the righteous behind. Once judgment day arrives, that separation shall be final (cf. Matt 13:47–50).²⁰⁸⁷

Read Matt 24:40–41. How do the two men in the field differ from each other? Why do you think Jesus chose activities like farming and grinding grain for this parable? Who do you think will be taken? Why?

²⁰⁷⁶Wilkins, *Matthew*, 801.

²⁰⁷⁷Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd Ed.*, 1094–5.

²⁰⁷⁸Bob Smietana, “Sorry, ‘Left Behind’: Only One-Third of Pastors Share Your End Times Theology,” *Christianity Today*, 26 April 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2016/april/sorry-left-behind-pastors-end-times-rapture-antichrist.html>.

²⁰⁷⁹F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 171.

²⁰⁸⁰Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 288.

²⁰⁸¹Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 256.

²⁰⁸²John Chrysostom, “Homily 4 on 2 Thessalonians,” in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon (NPNF1–13)* (ed. Philip Schaff; revisor John A. Broadus; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 388, <https://archive.org/stream/homiliesofsjohncl4john#page/490/mode/2up>.

²⁰⁸³Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament, Rev. Ed.*, 610–1.

²⁰⁸⁴France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 941.

²⁰⁸⁵Wilkins, *Matthew*, 801. However, the verb used in Matt 24:39 for “swept them away” differs from that in v. 40.

²⁰⁸⁶Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 591–2.

²⁰⁸⁷France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 941.

Continually Watch!

d) Matt 24:42–44: Evoking the image of a night watchman,²⁰⁸⁸ Christ concluded his previous illustration and introduced the next one.²⁰⁸⁹ He said, “Therefore, continually watch, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Matt 26:40–41).²⁰⁹⁰

Concerning such men, Josephus (37–100 AD) wrote this:

“Whatsoever it is which the king says or commands, it is done of necessity, and that without any delay, while he in the meantime is satiated with all sorts of food and pleasures, and sleeps in quiet. He is guarded by such as watch, and such as are...fixed down to the place through fear; for no one dares leave him, even when he is asleep, nor does anyone go away and take care of his own affairs; but he esteems this one thing the only work of necessity, to guard the king, and accordingly to this he wholly addicts himself.”²⁰⁹¹

This concept of watching requires preparation for Christ’s return, not merely looking forward to it. As the parables in Matt 24:45–25:46 indicate, we equip ourselves by behaving righteously in the various circumstances of life (1 Cor 16:13–14; 1 Pet 5:6–10).²⁰⁹²

In his second illustration, Jesus said, “But know this: if the owner of the house had known which time of night the thief was coming, he would have watched and not permitted him to dig into his house.”

Since burglary occurred commonly in Israel, this caught the disciples’ attention.²⁰⁹³ People typically built their homes from dried mud, so thieves could excavate through the walls or simply dig a hole from outside into the house (Matt 6:19–20).²⁰⁹⁴ Israelites considered a thief who broke in at night a dangerous threat. Therefore, a homeowner could kill such trespassers without retribution (Exod 22:2–3).²⁰⁹⁵

Some scholars attach no meaning to Jesus comparing himself to a sinister person. They stress only that his return will be sudden and unexpected.²⁰⁹⁶ Others note that Old Testament prophets frequently cited nocturnal thieves when pronouncing divine judgment (Jer 49:9–10; Obad 4–6; Joel 2:9–11).²⁰⁹⁷

An Aramaic paraphrase of Exod 12:42 names four important events which took place or would occur on the first night of Passover. These include creation (Gen 1–2), the Lord’s promise of descendants to Abraham (Gen 12:1–3; Gen 15:4–5), the inaugural ritual in Egypt (Exod 12:1–13), and the future arrival of the messiah.²⁰⁹⁸

This metaphor of Jesus coming like a thief made a strong impression upon the early church (2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:1–3; Rev 16:15).²⁰⁹⁹ Its meaning is straightforward: if you knew

²⁰⁸⁸Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 592.

²⁰⁸⁹Wilkins, *Matthew*, 802.

²⁰⁹⁰A present imperative in Greek denotes continuous or repetitive action.

²⁰⁹¹Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.3.4,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0146%3Abook%3D11%3Awhiston+chapter%3D3%3Awhiston+section%3D4>.

²⁰⁹²Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 720.

²⁰⁹³Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 592.

²⁰⁹⁴Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 384.

²⁰⁹⁵Keener, *IVPBBNT*, Matt 24:42–4.

²⁰⁹⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 720.

²⁰⁹⁷Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 592.

²⁰⁹⁸Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 163.

²⁰⁹⁹France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 942.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

someone planned to break into your home tonight, you would take precautions, such as remaining awake and on guard.²¹⁰⁰ Like the homeowner, we must remain alert to the possibility of Christ returning soon.²¹⁰¹ We have no idea when the time shall come.²¹⁰² Therefore, we must always remain ready.²¹⁰³

Christ concluded this illustration by saying, “For this reason, you also must be continually ready, because in an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.” No calculations or keeping track of signs can enable us to determine the date of Jesus’s return.²¹⁰⁴ Therefore, we must continuously engage in spiritual communion with the Lord.²¹⁰⁵ New Testament authors always linked their discussions of the end times with a call to ethical living. They never presented such theology merely to satisfy curiosity (Acts 1:6–11; 2 Thess 2:7–15; Rev 22:10–15).²¹⁰⁶

Noah and his family could not have predicted the time of the flood when they first received the command to build the ark (Gen 6:13–14). Yet, when the time came, they had prepared enough to be ready in only seven days (Gen 7:1–5). Meanwhile, everyone else went on living normally. Just like Noah, we must always remain prepared for what we know will come.²¹⁰⁷

An early Christian document called the Didache (50–120 AD) summarized the apostles’ teaching on this matter:

“Watch for your life’s sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come. But come together often, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not made perfect in the last time.

“For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increases, they shall hate and persecute and betray one another, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning.

“Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but those who endure in their faith shall be saved from under the curse itself. And then shall appear the signs of the truth: first, the sign of an outspreading in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet. And third, the resurrection of the dead -- yet not of all, but as it is said: “The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him.” Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.”²¹⁰⁸

Due to Jesus’s impending return, we must continually practice holiness as we await his appearing.

²¹⁰⁰Wilkins, *Matthew*, 802.

²¹⁰¹Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 720.

²¹⁰²France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 942–3.

²¹⁰³Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 720.

²¹⁰⁴France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 942–3.

²¹⁰⁵Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 385.

²¹⁰⁶Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 721.

²¹⁰⁷France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 943.

²¹⁰⁸Alexander Roberts, et al. (eds.), “The Didache: The Lord’s Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Volume 7: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, 2 Clement, Early Liturgies* (New York: Christian Literature, 1886), 382, <https://archive.org/stream/antenicenefather007robe#page/382/mode/2up>.

Read Matt 24:42–44. How will Jesus resemble a burglar breaking into a home at night? Why must we link our understanding of the end times with right living? Is there any value in predictions of when Christ shall return? Why or why not?

The Waters Prevail

3) Gen 7:17–20: This section begins the fifth scene of the flood narrative.²¹⁰⁹ One commentator titles Gen 7:17–24 as The Triumphant Flood, for here the story reaches its peak.²¹¹⁰ All the recorded action takes place outside of the ark,²¹¹¹ rendering a depiction of eerie, silent desolation.²¹¹² To enhance the mood, Moses employed repetition and often used words containing the letters m, b, and p to convey the impression of the ark rolling on the water.²¹¹³

He began by writing, “And the flood came to pass, forty days upon the earth. And the waters increased, and it lifted the ark, and it was high over all the earth.” For emphasis, Moses repeated the duration of the flood and that the rainfall consisted of a deluge.²¹¹⁴ He employed the same Hebrew word for the increase (*ravah*) of the waters that he reported the Lord had used to bless humans and animals that they might “multiply” (Gen 1:28) This gives us another hint that the flood reversed creation.²¹¹⁵

Indeed, “The waters prevailed (*gabar*) and they increased exceedingly upon the earth.” “Prevailed” connotes having the upper hand due to greater strength than opposing forces (Exod 17:8–13; 1 Sam 2:9–10).²¹¹⁶ Thus, the waters did not merely rise, they triumphed.²¹¹⁷ Moses used a form of this military word four times to describe this flood.²¹¹⁸ Chaotic waters which covered the earth at the beginning of God’s creative activity once again surged like hostile warriors, undoing the order which the Lord had put into place (Gen 1:1–2, 9–10).²¹¹⁹

Despite this savage tempest, “The ark proceeded on the surface of the waters.”²¹²⁰

As the waves crashed, the boat traveled over them.²¹²¹ This sentence conveys a sense of peace and safety. God in his mercy had shut Noah and his fellow passengers inside and he would bring them safely through the storm without harm.²¹²²

²¹⁰⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 158.

²¹¹⁰Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 139.

²¹¹¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 295.

²¹¹²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

²¹¹³Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 158.

²¹¹⁴Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 296.

²¹¹⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

²¹¹⁶H. Kosmala, “גָּבַר” (*gabhar*), *TDOT* 2:367–382, 368.

²¹¹⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

²¹¹⁸Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 296.

²¹¹⁹Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

²¹²⁰Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 296.

²¹²¹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

²¹²²Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 296.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

Moses wrote, “And the waters prevailed more and more exceedingly upon the earth, and all of the high mountains were covered which were under all of the heavens.” The sense of the Hebrew is hard to capture in English, as the beginning of the verse says, “prevailed exceedingly exceedingly upon the earth.” Hebrew authors often used repetition to express intensification,²¹²³ yet the term which occurs twice in a row already describes escalation.

This tremendous flow of water did not merely submerge the land masses: Moses continued, “Fifteen cubits higher prevailed the waters, and they covered the mountains.” This amounts to approximately twenty-two feet of flooding above the tallest mountains. Since the height of the ark reached 45 feet, this should have enabled the submerged portion to pass over the peaks without running aground.²¹²⁴

Years later, the powerful Akkadian ruler named Naram-Sin, who reigned from 2261–2224 BC, claimed, “I made the land of Akkad (look) like (after) the Deluge of water that happened at an early time of mankind.”²¹²⁵ In addition to his claim of overwhelming destruction in his quest to enlarge his territory, he placed the flood at a time long before his own. This contradicts Ussher’s estimate that the flood occurred in 2349–2348 BC.²¹²⁶

a) Read Gen 7:17–20. How did Moses communicate the vastness of this deluge? Based upon the text, what was the condition of the ark? What does this communicate about God’s ability to protect those he chooses to save from disaster?

The Breath of Life Extinguished

b) Gen 7:21–24: This passage describes the fulfillment of Gen 6:7, 17 and Gen 7:4. Moses wrote, “And all of flesh died: that which creeps on the earth, birds, and animals, and every living thing on all of the earth which swarm on the earth, and all of humanity.”

He listed each of these types of creatures in the order in which God created them, including people (Gen 1:20–26).²¹²⁷ However, he omitted marine creatures, writing, “All flesh which [had] the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils, all which [was] on dry ground, died. And he blotted out all that existed which was on the face of the earth, from humanity to animals to creeping things to birds of the heavens. And they were blotted out from the earth.”

Enuma Elish, a Babylon creation story, depicts the god Marduk using a storm to defeat the evil water goddess Tiamat. It says:

“In front of him he set the lightning, with a blazing flame he filled his body...The four winds he stationed that nothing of her might escape. The South Wind, the North Wind, the East Wind, the

²¹²³Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 431–2,

<https://archive.org/stream/geseniushebrewgr00geseuoft#page/430/mode/2up>.

²¹²⁴Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

²¹²⁵Gelb, et al, “Abubu,” in *CAD*, 1:77.,

https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/cad_a1.pdf.

²¹²⁶James Ussher, *The Annals of the World* (London: Crook and Bedell, 1658), 6,

<https://archive.org/stream/AnnalsOfTheWorld/Annals#page/n15/mode/2up>.

²¹²⁷Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 183.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

West Wind...He brought forth...‘the Evil Wind,’ the Whirl-wind, the Hurricane, the Fourfold Wind, the Sevenfold Wind, the Cyclone, the Matchless Wind. Then he sent forth the winds he had brought forth, the seven of them. To stir up the inside of Tiamat they rose up behind him. Then the lord raised up the flood-storm, his mighty weapon. He mounted the storm-chariot irresistible [and] terrifying.”²¹²⁸ Consistent with the biblical text, people in the Ancient Near East (ANE) recognized floods as a means for the gods to destroy the wicked.

“However, Noah was left and those with him in the ark.” In contrast to the condemned ones who were blotted out (*makhah*), Noah and his passengers were left behind (*shāar*).²¹²⁹ Both of these verbs occur in the passive tense,²¹³⁰ amplifying that the Lord controlled their fate (Cf. Gen 2:7).²¹³¹ The same waters which rendered divine judgment preserved a righteous remnant.²¹³² Noah was delivered, for God chose him. His family was saved due to their relationship with the Lord.²¹³³

Jewish scholars recognized Noah as the supreme example of a righteous remnant whom God preserved while everyone else faced judgment.²¹³⁴ For example, a second century BC text states, “Noah was found perfect and righteous; in the time of wrath he was taken in exchange; therefore a remnant was left to the earth when the flood came. Everlasting covenants were made with him that all flesh should not be blotted out by a flood” (Sirach 44:17–18, RSVCE).

This chapter in Genesis concludes by saying, “The waters prevailed upon the earth [for] 150 days.” The planet reverted to the form which existed when the waters of the great deep covered everything (Gen 1:1–2, 9).²¹³⁵ By the time the waters receded, Noah and his fellow passengers would spend one year on the ark.²¹³⁶ No other ANE flood account mentions the duration of the deluge.²¹³⁷

Read Gen 7:21–24. What is the significance of the order Moses chose to list who perished? Who survived? How does this text indicate that the Lord reversed what he had created? Does this passage encourage or discourage you? Why?

²¹²⁸Speiser, trans., “Enuma Elish (The Creation Epic),” in *ANET*, 4:39–50, 66,

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n91/mode/2up.

²¹²⁹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 297.

²¹³⁰Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “מַחַה” (*makhah*), *BDB*, 562,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/562/mode/2up>. This verb appears twice in this verse: first in an active form; then, passive.

²¹³¹Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 297.

²¹³²Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 140.

²¹³³Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 298.

²¹³⁴R. E. Clements, “שָׂאָר” (*shaar*), *TDOT* 14:272–86, 276.

²¹³⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 183.

²¹³⁶Walton, *Genesis*, 314.

²¹³⁷Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 425.

Faithful and True

4) **Rev 19:11:** Noah's generation came to an end due to an act of God's judgment. Those living when Christ returns will undergo a similar experience (Rev 19:11–21). Esoteric symbolism and exhortation characterize apocalyptic (end-times) literature.²¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the metaphors in the Apostle John's vision portray actual events.²¹³⁹ In Rev 19:12–16, John reported his vision in the form of a chiasm, with the central focus falling upon the armies of heaven clothed in white linen.²¹⁴⁰ Verse 11 says, "And I saw heaven had been opened, and behold, a white horse. And the one sitting on it [is] faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and wages war."

The first phrase indicates that John was reporting a new vision which he received.²¹⁴¹ That heaven had been opened not only announces new divine revelation (Mark 1:9–11; John 1:51; Acts 7:55–56),²¹⁴² it can portend judgment (Ezek 1:1; Ezek 2:1–4; Rev 4:1, 5; Rev 11:19; Rev 15:5–8).²¹⁴³ This imagery mirrors Jewish interpretations that the messiah would come as a great warrior.²¹⁴⁴

For example, a second century BC apocryphal book written from the perspective of the patriarch Levi expands upon Gen 34:1–7, 25–27. This work links the opening of the gates of heaven and judgment upon the wicked. It states:

"Know therefore, know that the Lord shall execute judgement upon the sons of men...They that bless Him shall be blessed, and they that curse Him shall perish. And thereupon the angel *opened to me the gates of heaven*, and I saw the holy temple, and upon a throne of glory the Most High... Then the angel brought me down to the earth, and gave me a shield and a sword, and said to me, 'Execute vengeance on Shechem because of Dinah, thy sister, and I will be with thee because the Lord hath sent me.' And I destroyed at that time the sons of Hamor, as it is written in the heavenly tables."²¹⁴⁵

Greco-Roman authors also associated the opening of heaven with divine revelation and doom.²¹⁴⁶ According to Virgil (70–19 BC):

"While thus in distant region moves the war...Saturn's daughter sends celestial Iris...And thus [she]...called with lips of rose, 'Behold, Aeneas...has left behind the city with his fleet and followers...Call for thy chariot and steeds! Away! Take yonder tents by terror and surprise!' She spoke; and heavenward on poising wings soared, cleaving as she fled from cloud to cloud a vast, resplendent bow. The warrior saw, and, lifting both his hands, pursued with prayer the fading glory, 'Beauteous Iris, hail!...Such solemn sign I shall obey.'"²¹⁴⁷ John's original audience recognized the motif of judgment occurring when the heavens opened.

Through the opened heavens, John saw a white steed and its rider. White represents both purity and vindication in the book of Revelation (Rev 3:3–5; Rev 6:9–11).²¹⁴⁸ Greco-Romans

²¹³⁸Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral, 2nd Ed.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 278.

²¹³⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 351, note 1.

²¹⁴⁰Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 956.

²¹⁴¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 949.

²¹⁴²David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1998), 1052.

²¹⁴³Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 949.

²¹⁴⁴Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 351.

²¹⁴⁵Rutherford H. Jr. Platt, "Testament of Levi," in *The Forgotten Books of Eden* (New York: Alpha Place, 1926), 2:1–12, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/fbe/fbe273.htm>.

²¹⁴⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1052.

²¹⁴⁷Virgil, *Aeneid* (trans. Theodore C. Williams; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910), 9:1–21.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0054%3Abook%3D9%3Acard%3D25>.

²¹⁴⁸Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 950.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

considered white steeds the most prized, appropriate for high-ranking officials and conquering kings.²¹⁴⁹

The historian Suetonius (ca. 69–130 AD) noted the elevation of Domitian's (51–96 AD) status after an initial debasement. He wrote:

“He likewise designed an expedition into Gaul and Germany, without the least necessity for it, and contrary to the advice of all his father's friends; and this he did only with the view of equalling his brother in military achievements and glory. But for this he was severely reprimanded, and that he might the more effectually be reminded of his age and position, was made to live with his father, and his litter had to follow his father's and brother's carriage, as often as they went abroad; but he attended them in their triumph for the conquest of Judaea, mounted on a white horse.”²¹⁵⁰

Furthermore, Greco-Romans believed in the existence of supernatural, immortal steeds which traveled between heaven and the earth.²¹⁵¹ Ovid (43 BC–17 AD) wrote this in praise of the sun god's horses, saying, “The dark-night pastures of Apollo's steeds are hid below the western skies; when there, and spent with toil, in lieu of nibbling herbs they take ambrosial food: it gives their limbs restoring strength and nourishes anew...his winged steeds.”²¹⁵²

In Revelation, this appearance of a rider on a white horse represents the return of Christ, the long-awaited second coming (*parousia*).²¹⁵³ If a Roman king on a white steed imparted fear, how much more should the conquering Lord of heaven.²¹⁵⁴

The first of four titles borne by Christ in this account of his return is “Faithful (*pistos*) and True (*alēthinos*)” (Cf. Rev 3:14).²¹⁵⁵ In extra-biblical Greek, this name appears only in 3 Macc 2:11, where the high priest petitioned the Lord to defend his honor by overthrowing a profane tyrant:²¹⁵⁶

“And because you love the house of Israel, you promised that if we should have reverses, and tribulation should overtake us, you would listen to our petition when we come to this place and pray. And indeed you are faithful and true..In our downfall this audacious and profane man undertakes to violate the holy place on earth dedicated to your glorious name...Speedily let your mercies overtake us, and put praises in the mouth of those who are downcast and broken in spirit, and give us peace” (3 Macc 2:10–20, RSV).

These attributes also describe the credibility of the words spoken in the book of Revelation (Rev 21:5–6; Rev 22:6).²¹⁵⁷ In the Old Testament, the name “faithful and true” appears only once, applying to God as a witness (Jer 42:5). However, the men who appealed to the Lord failed to do what they promised, bringing judgment upon themselves (Jer 42:20–22).²¹⁵⁸

²¹⁴⁹Keener, *Revelation*, 453.

²¹⁵⁰C. Tranquillus Suetonius, “Domitian,” Pages 500–25 in *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (trans. Alexander Thompson; Philadelphia: Gebbie, 1883), 501.

<https://archive.org/stream/livesoftwelvecsa00suet#page/n557/mode/2up>.

²¹⁵¹Keener, *Revelation*, 456.

²¹⁵²Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (trans. Brookes More; Boston: Cornhill, 1922), 4:214–6, 262,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0028%3Abook%3D4%3Acard%3D167>.

²¹⁵³Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1053.

²¹⁵⁴Keener, *Revelation*, 453.

²¹⁵⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 352.

²¹⁵⁶Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 950.

²¹⁵⁷Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1053.

²¹⁵⁸Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 951.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

Removing any doubt about the intention of the rider upon the white steed, John wrote, “And in righteousness he judges and wages war.” The book of Revelation repeatedly reinforces the justness of divine judgment (e.g. Rev 16:5–7; Rev 19:2).²¹⁵⁹ At last the followers of the beast will receive the answer to their question (Rev 13:4).²¹⁶⁰ Judging with righteousness involves not only destroying God’s enemies but also saving his people (Ps 9:7–10; Ps 96:7–13; Isa 11:1–5).²¹⁶¹

By the first century BC, Jewish people expected the messiah to judge the nations in one final conflict.²¹⁶²

“Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David...that he may reign over Israel Thy servant. And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction...At his rebuke nations shall flee before him, and he shall reprove sinners for the thoughts of their heart. And he shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness...And he shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any more in their midst, nor shall there dwell with them any man that knoweth wickedness, for he shall know them, that they are all sons of their God.”²¹⁶³ John identified this messiah as Jesus (Rev 1:12–18).

Righteous judgment characterizes the Lord’s actions (2 Tim 4:7–8; 1 Pet 2:21–25). Therefore, he expected Israel’s judges, for her kings, and even individuals to judge justly (Deut 1:16–17; Deut 16:18–20; Prov 31:1, 9; Zech 7:8–10). Jesus demanded that the people of God apply the same principles (John 7:24).²¹⁶⁴

a) Read Rev 19:11. Why is it significant that heaven had been opened? What did someone riding upon a white horse symbolize? How does knowing that Jesus will judge justly make you feel?

Ruler of All Nations

b) Rev 19:12–13: John began his description of the one riding the white horse in Rev 19:11 by writing, “And his eyes [are] a flame of fire.”²¹⁶⁵ This depiction confirms Jesus’s deity and reveals his fury (Dan 10:4–9; Rev 1:12–18; Rev 2:18–23).²¹⁶⁶ As the divine judge,²¹⁶⁷ nothing can hide from his sight.²¹⁶⁸ He will unmask even those who falsely claim him as Lord.²¹⁶⁹

²¹⁵⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 352.

²¹⁶⁰Keener, *Revelation*, 452.

²¹⁶¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 950–1.

²¹⁶²Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 351.

²¹⁶³G. Buchanan Gray, trans., “The Psalms of Solomon,” in *APOT* (ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 17:21–22, 25–27. <http://www.goodnewsinc.net/othbooks/psalmsol.html>.

²¹⁶⁴Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1053.

²¹⁶⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 353.

²¹⁶⁶Keener, *Revelation*, 453.

²¹⁶⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 951.

²¹⁶⁸Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 353.

²¹⁶⁹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 951.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

In addition, John wrote, “On his head [are] many crowns.” Within the ancient world, an emperor wore one diadem to represent each city or nation he ruled.²¹⁷⁰ For example, the ring of Ptolemy VI Philometer (ca. 186–145 BC) shows him wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.²¹⁷¹ While conquering Syria, “Ptolemy entered Antioch and put on the crown of Asia. Thus, he put two crowns on his head, the crown of Egypt and that of Asia” (1 Macc 11:13, NRSVCE). For Greco-Romans, this symbolized a major victory.²¹⁷²

Consequently, John’s original readers understood that this vision of Christ wearing many crowns signified that he rules over all dominions (Rev 1:5; Rev 19:6),²¹⁷³ and that all authority belongs to him.²¹⁷⁴ This portends a cosmic battle with the dragon and the beast (Rev 12:3; Rev 13:1). In contrast, the crowns which Jesus’s followers shall wear symbolize our identification with Christ (Rev 2:10; Rev 3:10–11; Rev 4:4).²¹⁷⁵

John also described the rider as, “having a name which has been written which no one has known except himself.” Earlier in Revelation, Jesus made a similar vow to victorious believers (Rev 2:17; Rev 3:12).²¹⁷⁶ This concept of receiving a new name reflects promises made in the Old Testament (Isa 62:2–4, Isa 65:15). That Jesus’s name remained unknown in John’s vision indicates that Isaiah’s prophecies of a marriage relationship with Christ had not yet come to fruition.²¹⁷⁷ Someday, it shall be known to all of God’s people.²¹⁷⁸

This title may be inscribed directly on Jesus.²¹⁷⁹ However, given the context, Christ’s secret name likely appears on the diadems which he wore (Rev 13:1).²¹⁸⁰ The high priest bore the name of Yahweh on a gold plate placed upon his turban (Exod 28:36–38). Furthermore, in the age to come, the people of God shall have the names of the Father and the Son inscribed on our foreheads (Rev 14:1; Rev 22:3–4).²¹⁸¹

In the ancient world, people believed that knowing the name of a god or demon enabled a person to exert power over it.²¹⁸² This spell appears in a Greek magic text: “You master Typhon, you who I call, who are the dreaded sovereign o’er the firmament. You who are fearful, awesome, threatening. You who’re obscure and irresistible and hater of the wicked, you I call, Typhon...I invoke you in prayer, I call, almighty one, that you perform for me whate’er I ask of you, and that you nod assent at once to me and grant that what I ask be mine...*for I speak your true names.*”²¹⁸³

²¹⁷⁰Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1054.

²¹⁷¹Wikimedia Commons, “File: Ring with Engraved Portrait of Ptolemy VI Philometor (3rd–2nd Century BCE).” [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ring_with_engraved_portrait_of_Ptolemy_VI_Philometor_\(3rd–2nd_century_BCE\)_-_20080315.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ring_with_engraved_portrait_of_Ptolemy_VI_Philometor_(3rd–2nd_century_BCE)_-_20080315.jpg).

²¹⁷²Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1054.

²¹⁷³Keener, *Revelation*, 453.

²¹⁷⁴Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 353.

²¹⁷⁵Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 952–3.

²¹⁷⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1055.

²¹⁷⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 953.

²¹⁷⁸G. K. Beale and Sean M. McDonough, “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1143.

²¹⁷⁹Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1055.

²¹⁸⁰Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 955.

²¹⁸¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 955.

²¹⁸²Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 353.

²¹⁸³Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells, 2nd Ed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 4:264–80, 43, https://fewarethemystaidotcom.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/hans_dieter_betz__greek_magical_papyri_in_translabo-okos-org.pdf. Italics mine.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

Plato (427–347 BC) reported that Socrates (469–399 BC) said, “We, if we are sensible, must recognize that...of the gods we know nothing, neither of them nor of their names, whatever they may be, by which they call themselves, for it is clear that they use the true names.”²¹⁸⁴

This concept may explain why divine visitors in the Old Testament (OT) refused to identify themselves (Gen 32:24–29; Judg 13:17–18).²¹⁸⁵

A Jewish apocryphal text, which was augmented in the Christian era (2nd century BC–4th century AD), depicts Isaiah’s purported experience.²¹⁸⁶

“And [the angel] took me into the air of the seventh heaven, and moreover I heard a voice saying, ‘How far will he ascend that dwelleth in the flesh?’ And I feared and trembled...And when I trembled, behold, I heard from hence another voice being sent forth, and saying, ‘It is permitted to the holy Isaiah to ascend hither; for here is his garment.’

“And I asked the angel who was with me and said, “Who is he who...permitted me to ascend?” And he said unto me...“He who permitted thee, this is thy Lord God, the Lord Christ, who will be called “Jesus” in the world, but *His name thou canst not hear till thou hast ascended out of thy body.*”²¹⁸⁷

Since no one currently knows Jesus’s secret name, he remains sovereign over everyone. Medieval Jewish scholars believed that after the events of Ps 9:3–8 occur, then Ps 9:9–10 shall be fulfilled. One document states that the Lord will “renew in the time-to-come...the name of the Messiah” ((Pesikta Rabbati 12.9). Another text notes that after he destroys evil people, “the name of God will be complete” (Pesikta de Rab Kahana 3.16).²¹⁸⁸

As John’s vision concerns the future, Christ’s unknown name will not remain a secret forever. Many people will learn the meaning of that name in terms of justice and vengeance. Yet for all who enter a close relationship with him, Jesus’s secret name will speak of grace and salvation (Eph 1:3–11).²¹⁸⁹

John further described the rider, writing, “And he has put on a garment having been dipped in blood.” This depicted a heavenly warrior covered with the blood of those he has slain, not a metaphor for Christ’s atoning blood.²¹⁹⁰ Although the battle had not yet begun, the messiah’s bloodstained clothing represented certain victory.²¹⁹¹ Justice rendered to God’s enemies shall usher in the fullness of his kingdom.²¹⁹²

Early Hebrew poetry depicts the Lord as a divine warrior (Exod 15:1–10; Deut 33:26–29; Judg 5:4–5, 19–23). This image intensifies in the prophetic books (Isa 42:13; Isa 59:14–20; Hab 3:11–15).²¹⁹³ Many New Testament (NT) scholars recognize that the language of Rev 19 closely

²¹⁸⁴Plato, “Cratylus,” in *Plato in Twelve Volumes* (trans. Harold N. Fowler; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 400d, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0172%3Atext%3DCrat.%3Asection%3D400d>.

²¹⁸⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 353.

²¹⁸⁶Peter Kirby, “Ascension of Isaiah.”

²¹⁸⁷R. H. Charles, trans., “The Ascension of Isaiah,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 9:1–5, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ascension.html>. Italics mine.

²¹⁸⁸Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 954.

²¹⁸⁹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 954–7.

²¹⁹⁰Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1057.

²¹⁹¹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 354.

²¹⁹²Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 958.

²¹⁹³Theodore Hiebert, “Warrior, Divine.,” *ABD* 6:876–80, 876.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

adheres to Isa 63:1–6.²¹⁹⁴ In the end, everyone will know that the holy warrior is Jesus (Cf. Isa 41:21–25; Phil 2:9–11).²¹⁹⁵

This OT passage confirms that the blood spattered upon his clothing will come from the enemies of God.²¹⁹⁶ Thus, Christ shall exact justice for his people through both vengeance and redemption.²¹⁹⁷ As the rest of this chapter in Revelation clarifies, the blood flowing from the wine press in Isaiah represents all who live in rebellion against God (cf. Rev 14:18–20).²¹⁹⁸

A very interesting parallel to Rev 19:13 appears in an Aramaic paraphrase of Gen 49:11, a text which precedes the Christian era.²¹⁹⁹ The Jerusalem Targum states:

“How beautiful is the King [Messiah], who is to arise from the house of [Judah]! Binding his loins and going forth to war against them that hate him, he will slay kings with princes, and make the rivers red with the blood of their slain, and his hills white with the fat of their mighty ones; *his garments will be dipped in blood*, and he himself be like the juice of the wine press.”²²⁰⁰

This image of a heavenly warrior with bloody clothing would also have frightened Greco-Roman readers.²²⁰¹ By the time of Christ, Roman field commanders wore red garments into battle.²²⁰²

Ovid (43 BC–17 AD) portrayed an angry goddess this way:

“[She], revengeful, takes a torch;—*besmeared with blood, and vested in a robe, dripping with crimson gore*, and twisting-snakes engirdled, she departs her dire abode—with twitching Madness, Terror, Fear and Woe: and when she had arrived at the destined house, the door-posts shrank from her, the maple doors turned ashen grey: the Sun amazed fled...but suddenly that baneful Fury stood across the way, blocking the passage.”²²⁰³

Similarly, Christ shall render justice upon the earth,²²⁰⁴ covered by the blood of his enemies.

John then revealed another pseudonym for this warrior, writing, “And his name [is] the Word of God.” Since the only other place in the NT where this title appears is in John’s gospel (John 1:1),²²⁰⁵ this title provides another hint that the mysterious rider is Jesus.

While the Word of God came to inaugurate the kingdom of God at his first coming, at his return he shall usher in the age to come in all its fullness. By his authoritative declaration, he shall destroy everyone who rebels against him.²²⁰⁶

According to a Jewish apocryphal book:

“For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, *your all-powerful word* leaped from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed, a stern warrior carrying the *sharp sword of your authentic command*, and stood and

²¹⁹⁴Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1143.

²¹⁹⁵Keener, *Revelation*, 453–4.

²¹⁹⁶Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 353.

²¹⁹⁷Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1143.

²¹⁹⁸Keener, *Revelation*, 454.

²¹⁹⁹Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 2nd Ed., 82.

²²⁰⁰C. W. H. Pauli, “Comparison of Pentateuch: Jewish Publication Society 1917 Targums Onkelos, Jonathan Ben Uzziel/Palestinian, Jerusalem Fragments,” Gen 49:11, <http://juchre.org/targums/comp/gen49.htm>. Italics mine.

²²⁰¹Keener, *Revelation*, 453.

²²⁰²Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1057.

²²⁰³Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (trans. Brookes More; Boston: Cornhill, 1922), 4:481–2,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0028%3Abook%3D4%3Acard%3D481>.

²²⁰⁴Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1143.

²²⁰⁵Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1058.

²²⁰⁶Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 354.

filled all things with death, and touched heaven while standing on the earth (Wisdom 18:14–16, NRSV).²²⁰⁷

Read Rev 19:12–13. Why are Jesus’s eyes described as “a flame of fire”? How does wearing many crowns signify his sovereignty? What importance would the original audience have attached to Christ having a secret name? Why shall he return? Whose blood will stain Christ’s clothing? Does this passage elicit encouragement or dread in you? Why?

The Armies in Heaven

c) Rev 19:14: In Rev 19:11–21, John frequently shifted verb tenses between the present, the future, and the past. This is in keeping with his report of a vision he had already seen concerning realities yet to come.²²⁰⁸

Since Rev 19:11–16 forms a chiasm,²²⁰⁹ the central focus of the entire passage falls upon v. 14. It says, “And the armies in heaven were following him on white horses, having been clothed in pure white linen.” These military forces mounted steeds like that of their commander (Rev 19:11).²²¹⁰

Much debate revolves around who comprises these armies. In the Old Testament, the armies of heaven appear to be angels, typically borne by chariots (Josh 5:13–15; Ps 68:17; 2 Ki 6:15–17).²²¹¹ Earlier, John described a battle between the angel Michael and his troops against Satan and his forces (Rev 12:7–9).²²¹² Elsewhere in the New Testament, angels assist Christ in rendering final judgment (Mark 8:38; Matt 13:40–42; Matt 16:27).²²¹³

However, Ps 149 indicates that God’s people shall participate in executing judgment.²²¹⁴ A parallel passage in Revelation calls those fighting on Christ’s side “called and chosen and faithful” (Rev 17:14).²²¹⁵ Since John described the people numbered among the 144,000 as ones “who follow the Lamb wherever he goes,” some scholars suggest that they belong within the armies of God (Rev 14:1–4).²²¹⁶

Early Christians held that deceased believers joined the angels in these armies.²²¹⁷ For example, the Didache (ca. 100 AD) teaches that, “The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.”²²¹⁸

²²⁰⁷Italics mine.

²²⁰⁸Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 961.

²²⁰⁹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 956.

²²¹⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 354.

²²¹¹Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Rev 19:14.

²²¹²Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1059.

²²¹³Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1143.

²²¹⁴Keener, *IVPBBCNT*, Rev 19:14.

²²¹⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 354.

²²¹⁶Keener, *Revelation*, 454.

²²¹⁷Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1059–60.

²²¹⁸Roberts, et al. (eds.), “The Didache: The Lord’s Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations,” 16:7, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html>.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

The Jewish/Christian hybrid Ascension of Isaiah (ca. 150–200 AD) reports: “The Lord will come with His angels and with the armies of the holy ones from the seventh heaven with the glory of the seventh heaven, and He will drag Beliar (the devil) into Gehenna and also his armies...*The saints will come with the Lord with their garments which are (now) stored up on high in the seventh heaven: with the Lord they will come, whose spirits are clothed, they will descend and be present in the world.*”²²¹⁹

However, these armies will not engage the enemy in battle.²²²⁰ Instead, they provide testimony against oppressors for their unbelief (Matt 12:38–42).²²²¹ As a result of our union with Christ, we triumph through identification with our Lord (Rev 2:25–29).²²²² Christ alone shall conquer the beast and his followers on behalf of those who accompany him (Rev 19:19–21).²²²³

The color of the horses and their pure white raiment reflects the holiness of Christ’s armies (Rev 15:5–6; Rev 19:7–9).²²²⁴ In the case of believers, this serves as proof of our vindication resulting from Jesus’s sacrificial death (1 Cor 1:30–31; 2 Cor 5:21; Col 2:13–15), as well as for standing firm to the end (Rev 6:9–11; Rev 7:9–10, 13–17).²²²⁵

Read Rev 19:14. Who do you think will be included in the armies of God? What is their purpose? Why will they be clothed in white and riding on white horses? How does God see you?

Striking the Nations

d) Rev 19:15: In this verse, John returned to his vision of the victorious Christ (Rev 19:11–13). He wrote, “And from his mouth comes a sharp sword, in order that with it he might strike the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God Almighty.”

The apostle incorporated allegorical elements,²²²⁶ with four clear allusions to the Old Testament (OT).²²²⁷ First, the returning messiah shall have a sharp sword protruding from his mouth (Rev 1:16–17). This refers to the lethal power of his pronouncements, rather than to a physical weapon (Isa 11:4; Hos 6:4–6; Rev 2:14–16; Heb 4:12).²²²⁸ That Christ shall strike the nations alludes to Ps 2.²²²⁹ Ungodly rulers and nations who seek to overthrow the authority of the Lord will fail (2 Thess 2:8–10).²²³⁰

²²¹⁹Charles, trans., “The Ascension of Isaiah,” 4:14–16, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ascension.html>. Italics mine.

²²²⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 354–5.

²²²¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 960.

²²²²Bradley G. Green, *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience, and Faithfulness in the Christian Life* (ed. D. A. Carson; New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 158.

²²²³Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1143.

²²²⁴Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1060.

²²²⁵Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 960.

²²²⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1058.

²²²⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 961.

²²²⁸Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 355.

²²²⁹Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1060.

²²³⁰Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 961.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

A Jewish apocryphal book (ca. 90–100 AD)) fits the scenario of Rev 19 quite well: “I dreamed a dream in the night...and I looked and [saw] the figure of a man come up out of the heart of the sea. And I looked, and behold, that man flew with the clouds of heaven; and wherever he turned his face to look, everything under his gaze trembled, and whenever his voice issued from his mouth, all who heard his voice melted as wax melts when it feels the fire. “After this I looked, and behold, an innumerable multitude of men were gathered together from the four winds of heaven to make war against the man who came up out of the sea...and behold, when he saw the onrush of the approaching multitude, he neither lifted his hand nor held a spear or any weapon of war; but I saw only how he sent forth from his mouth as it were a stream of fire, and from his lips a flaming breath, and from his tongue he shot forth a storm of sparks. All these were mingled together, the stream of fire and the flaming breath and the great storm and fell on the onrushing multitude which was prepared to fight, and burned them all up, so that suddenly nothing was seen of the innumerable multitude but only the dust of ashes and the smell of smoke....

“After this I saw the same man...call to him another multitude which was peaceable. Then many people came to him, some of whom were joyful and some sorrowful; some of them were bound, and some were bringing others as offerings. Then in great fear I awoke” (4 Ezra 13:1–13, RSV). The sword in John’s vision serves as a metaphor for the final judgment awaiting the wicked.²²³¹

“He shall rule them with a rod of iron” alludes to the Greek translation of Ps 2:9.²²³² The word translated as “shall rule” (*poimainō*) typically means “shall shepherd.”²²³³ Adding to the confusion, the Hebrew verb used in that psalm means “break” (*rāa*)²²³⁴ However, that makes sense due to the parallelism of the second half of the verse regarding a wine press. Thus, it appears that John chose to use the rod of iron as a symbol of destruction for Christ’s enemies but of protection for his people (Jer 23:1–6; Ezek 34:1–4, 15–6; Ps 23:1–4).²²³⁵

A first century BC Jewish apocryphal book pulls these nuances together, saying of the messiah, “Righteously he shall thrust out sinners from (the) inheritance. He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter’s vessel. With a rod of iron, he shall break in pieces all their substance. He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth.”²²³⁶

The third metaphor John used to describe the actions of the messiah asserts, “He treads the wine press of the fierce anger of God Almighty.” Here the apostle combined the images of the cup of God’s anger and of treading upon a wine press (Cf. Rev 14:9–10, 14–20).²²³⁷ Treading grapes by throwing them into a vat with a spout at the bottom consisted of a familiar symbol of divine wrath to the original audience (Joel 3:12–13; Lam 1:15).²²³⁸

However, the closest OT parallel occurs in Isa 63:1–6.²²³⁹ In that passage, God announced the destruction of Edom, the nation which descended from Jacob’s brother Esau (Gen 25:30).

²²³¹ Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1061.

²²³² Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 962.

²²³³ Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “*ποιμαίνω*” (*poimainō*), *BDAG*, 842.

²²³⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “*רָא*” (*rā’a*), *BDB*, 949,

<https://archive.org/stream/hebrewenglishlex00browuoft#page/948/mode/2up>.

²²³⁵ Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 962.

²²³⁶ Gray, trans., “The Psalms of Solomon,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 17:24, <http://www.goodnewsinc.net/othbooks/psalmsol.html>.

²²³⁷ Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1062.

²²³⁸ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 280–1.

²²³⁹ Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1144.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

In the Aramaic paraphrase called Targum Jonathan, the field of destruction widens:²²⁴⁰ “Wherefore are the mountains red from the blood of the slain? Yea, the valleys shall flow as the wine from the wine press. Behold, as the grapes are trodden in the vat, thus He shall increase the slaughter in the camps of the nations; they shall have no strength before me: yea, I will slay them in my anger, and tread them down in my fury; and I will break the strength of their mighty ones before me, and all their wise men will I consume.”²²⁴¹

On the day of his return, Christ shall slay everyone not allied with him in the wine press of his wrath.²²⁴² Within Rev 6–19, the Greek words for “anger” (*orgē*) or “wrath” (*thymos*) appear thirteen times (e.g. Rev 11:16–18 and Rev 16:1).²²⁴³ These terms occur more often in the Greek translation of the OT (623x) compared to the New Testament (NT) (54x).²²⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the view that, in the NT, God always loves and never punishes sin does not conform to the testimony of the NT.²²⁴⁵

Read Rev 19:15. What does the sword in Christ’s mouth symbolize? How will the nations be affected by the Messiah’s rod of iron? Why is treading grapes an image of God’s wrath? What warning or encouragement do you derive from this verse?

King of Kings and Lord of Lords

e) **Rev 19:16:** John’s description of the rider on the white steed in Rev 19:11–16 concludes by saying, “And he has on his robe and on his thigh a name which had been inscribed, ‘King of kings and Lord of lords.’ Where exactly this title appears causes some controversy among commentators.²²⁴⁶ Is it written in two places or on only one?”²²⁴⁷

Fortunately, Greek grammar assists us here. The word which we usually translate as “and” (*kai*) can also mean “that is” or “namely.”²²⁴⁸ As a result, we can translate this clause as, “And he has on his robe, namely, on his thigh, a name....”

When astride a horse, a person’s thighs present prominently, making them appropriate places for an exalted title. Warriors also hung their swords from their thighs (Exod 32:27; Judg 3:16).²²⁴⁹ In addition, someone taking an oath would place a hand under the thigh of the one receiving the promise (Gen 24:2–4; Gen 47:29–31). Therefore, this detail in Revelation symbolizes that Jesus’s victory over evil will fulfill the Lord’s promise to judge the wicked.²²⁵⁰

²²⁴⁰Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1061.

²²⁴¹Pauli, “Comparison of Pentateuch: Jewish Publication Society 1917 Targums Onkelos, Jonathan Ben Uzziel/Palestinian, Jerusalem Fragments,” Isa 63:2–3, <http://juchre.org/targums/isaiah/comp/isa63.htm>.

²²⁴²Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 963.

²²⁴³Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 355–6.

²²⁴⁴Results of Logos 6 word studies on the nouns “ὀργή” (*orgē*) and “θυμός” (*thymos*).

²²⁴⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 356.

²²⁴⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1062.

²²⁴⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 963.

²²⁴⁸Arndt, Danker, and Bauer, “καί” (*kai*), *BDAG*, 494–6, 495.

²²⁴⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 356.

²²⁵⁰Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1144.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

John’s original audience would have recognized this imagery.²²⁵¹ The second century AD geographer Pausanias wrote this about a statue he saw:

“The offering of the Mendeans in Thrace came very near to beguiling me into the belief that it was a representation of a competitor in the pentathlon ...It holds ancient jumping-weights. A... couplet is written on its thigh, ‘To Zeus, king of the gods, as first-fruits was I placed here.’”²²⁵²

Written on the messiah’s thigh, an inscription says: “King of kings and Lord of lords.” In the Old Testament, that title applied to Yahweh as the supreme ruler (Deut 10:16–18; Ps 136:1–3; Dan 2:47).²²⁵³

Jewish apocryphal books also applied this term only to God. For example, 1 Enoch (2nd century BC–1st century AD) says:

“Then they said to their Lord, the King, Thou art *Lord of lords*, God of gods, *King of kings*. The throne of thy glory is for ever and ever, and for ever and ever is thy name sanctified and glorified. Thou art blessed and glorified. Thou hast made all things; thou possessest power over all things; and all things are open and manifest before thee...Nothing can be concealed from thee.”²²⁵⁴

Plutarch (ca. 45–125 AD) noted that the Roman ruler Pompey “would not deign, in answering a letter from the king of Parthia, to address him as King of Kings, which was his usual title.”²²⁵⁵

People within the Ancient Near East also applied that title to human kings (Dan 2:36–38; Ezek 26:7; Ezra 7:12).²²⁵⁶ The Lord overturned the claim of King Nebuchadnezzar (534–562 BC) to the title King of kings (Dan 4:30–37). Even so shall Christ overthrow the beast of Revelation (Rev 13:1–2; Rev 19:20).²²⁵⁷

Here “King of kings and Lord of lords” applies to Christ, rather than referring strictly to Yahweh (Cf. Rev 17:14).²²⁵⁸ Ultimately, Jesus rules over all the kings on the earth (Phil 2:9–11; Rev 1:5).²²⁵⁹ Everyone will see this when he triumphs over all his enemies.²²⁶⁰

Read Rev 19:16. What is the significance of the inscription on the rider’s thigh? How does the photograph of a Hungarian crown (<https://redemptivehistorytheology.com/blog/chapter-7-god-opens-the-heavens-and-earth-genesis-71-24/king-of-kings-and-lord-of-lords/>) illustrate this truth?

²²⁵¹Keener, *Revelation*, 455.

²²⁵²Pausanias, *Description of Greece* (trans. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 5.27.12, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0160%3Abook%3D5%3Achapter%3D27%3Asection%3D12>. I had the privilege of seeing a similar statue of an athlete in the exhibition The Greeks (http://press.nationalgeographic.com/2016/03/23/greeks-exhibition-to-open-june-1-at-national-geographic-museum-in-washington-d-c/)

²²⁵³Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 356.

²²⁵⁴Charles, trans., “Book of Enoch,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 9:4–6, 21. <http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n135/mode/2up>. Italics mine.

²²⁵⁵Plutarch, “Pompey,” in *Plutarch’s Lives* (trans. Bernadotte Perrin; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 38.2, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0058%3Achapter%3D38%3Asection%3D2>.

²²⁵⁶Keener, *Revelation*, 454.

²²⁵⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 963–4.

²²⁵⁸Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1062–3.

²²⁵⁹Keener, *Revelation*, 454–5.

²²⁶⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 356.

The Great Supper of God

f) Rev 19:17–19: These verses form the preface to the destruction of the ungodly world system which will begin with the devastation of a city identified as Babylon in Rev 18:1–3.²²⁶¹ John wrote, “And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and it cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven, ‘Come. Gather for the great supper of God.’”

By standing in the sun, this angel stood in a position of appropriate splendor.²²⁶² The herald made the announcement before the battle occurred, portending certain victory.²²⁶³ In stark contrast to the wedding celebration of the lamb and his bride (Rev 19:7–8; Isa 25:6–9; Matt 8:11),²²⁶⁴ this feast by predatory birds will create a grim spectacle.²²⁶⁵

Ironically, the Babylonian creation epic Enuma Elish describes a scene after the great battle against rebel gods and the completion of Babylon.²²⁶⁶ It says:

“The three hundred Igigi (gods)...all of them gathered, the lord being on the lofty dais which they had built as his abode, the gods, his fathers, at his banquet he seated, [saying], “This is Babylon, the place that is your home! Make merry in its precincts, occupy its broad [places].” The great gods took their seats, they set up festive drink, sat down to a banquet.²²⁶⁷

The birds in John’s vision will feast upon flesh with no concern for human rank or social status.²²⁶⁸ The angel called them together, “that you might eat flesh of kings, and flesh of generals, and flesh of [the] mighty, and flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and flesh of all free [people], and also of slaves, even the small and the great.”

John’s readers recognized the image of birds scavenging the corpses of people killed in battle (1 Sam 17:44–47; Jer 16:4; Ezek 29:3–6).²²⁶⁹ People in the ancient world considered that a horrendous, dishonorable fate.²²⁷⁰ In Jewish and Greco-Roman views of death, a person’s image continued to endure in the underworld (1 Sam 28:11–14).²²⁷¹ Therefore, they regarded such mutilation as a fate worse than dying.

Homer (ca. 750 BC) wrote this speech to a warrior:

“Hector, my dear child, abide not...alone with none to aid thee, lest forthwith thou meet thy doom, slain by the son of Peleus, since verily he is far the mightier—cruel that he is. I would that he were loved by the gods even as by me! Then would the dogs and vultures speedily devour him as he lay unburied; so would dread sorrow depart from my soul, seeing he hath made me bereft of sons many and valiant.”²²⁷²

The apostle’s original audience likely perceived this despicable end as the fulfillment of

²²⁶¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 965.

²²⁶²Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 357.

²²⁶³Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 965.

²²⁶⁴Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1063.

²²⁶⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 357.

²²⁶⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1063.

²²⁶⁷Speiser, trans., “Enuma Elish (The Creation Epic),” in *ANET*, 6:69–75, 69,

https://archive.org/stream/Pritchard1950ANET_20160815/Pritchard_1950_ANET#page/n93/mode/2up.

²²⁶⁸Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 357–8.

²²⁶⁹Keener, *Revelation*, 455.

²²⁷⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 358.

²²⁷¹L. Wächter, “אֵלֶּיךָ” (*sheol*) *TDOT* 14:239–48, 241–2.

²²⁷²Homer, *The Iliad*, 22:38–44,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0134%3Abook%3D22%3Acard%3D38>.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

Ezek 39:1–6, 17–20.²²⁷³ Thus, they recognized Gog and Magog as the beast, the false prophet, and their armies whom Christ would vanquish.²²⁷⁴ As in Rev 19:11–16, Ezek 39:7–8, 21 stresses the importance of God making known his holy name.²²⁷⁵ Jesus shall accomplish this by delivering his people and rendering judgment to their oppressors.²²⁷⁶ John’s list of those who would die parallels the one in Rev 6:14–17.²²⁷⁷ His depiction of devastation coming upon the oppressors of God’s people encouraged persecuted believers.²²⁷⁸

The apostle described what he saw next, writing, “And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies having been gathered together to make the war with the one sitting on the horse and with his armies.” This fulfills the prophecy of Rev 16:13–14. That a definite article (“the”) appears with the word “war” in the Greek texts of Rev 16:14, Rev 19:19, and Rev 20:8 indicates that all three verses speak of one battle.²²⁷⁹ Battle in Armageddon shall commence.²²⁸⁰

The beast will join Satan and his demonic forces to assemble kings and their armies. Although they will believe that they act of their own accord, God will muster these armies (Ezek 39:1–2; Zech 14:2–5).²²⁸¹ This great battle will swiftly put an end to all evil and usher in the long-awaited new era of righteousness.²²⁸²

Read Rev 19:17–19. What will the angel call the birds to do? Why did John’s original readers consider such mutilation a fate worse than death? How do Old Testament texts specify that the Lord will assemble these armies?

Cast into the Inferno

g) Rev 19:20–21: The foretold judgment of Rev 19:11–19 shall finally take place. As throughout the book of Revelation, John gave no portrayal of the battle but described only the result.²²⁸³ He wrote, “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs before him, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”

Nero inflicted horrific persecution upon the Christian community during his reign over the Roman Empire (54–68 AD). The Greco-Roman historian Tacitus (56–120 AD) noted: “To get rid of the report [that he set Rome on fire in 64 AD] Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the

²²⁷³Keener, *Revelation*, 455.

²²⁷⁴Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 966.

²²⁷⁵Beale and McDonough, “Revelation,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 1144.

²²⁷⁶Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 966.

²²⁷⁷Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1064.

²²⁷⁸Keener, *IVPBCNT*, Rev 19:17–18.

²²⁷⁹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 967–8.

²²⁸⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 358.

²²⁸¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 967.

²²⁸²Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 358.

²²⁸³Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1065.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular.

“Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty, then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.”²²⁸⁴

Therefore, many believers in the early church viewed Nero as the beast, with “Babylon” serving as a code word for Rome (Rev 13:1–9; Rev 17:1–9). Even after Nero committed suicide, many people concluded he was not truly dead but would return in the future.²²⁸⁵

Suetonius (ca. 69–140 AD), a Roman historian, reported:

“[Nero] died in the thirty-second year of his age, upon the same day on which he had formerly put [his wife] Octavia to death; and the public joy was so great upon the occasion, that the common people ran about the city...Some, however...for a long time decked his tomb with spring and summer flowers. Sometimes they placed his image upon the [dais], dressed in robes of state...They published proclamations in his name, as if he were still alive, and would shortly return to Rome, and take vengeance on all his enemies.”²²⁸⁶

The Christian apocryphal book the Ascension of Isaiah (ca. 150–200 AD) also cites Nero as the beast,²²⁸⁷ calling him “the slayer of his mother:”

“These are the days of the completion of the world...Beliar [the devil], the great ruler, the king of this world, will descend...in the likeness of a man, a lawless king, the slayer of his mother who... will persecute the [church]...This ruler in the form of that king will come and there will come with him all the powers of this world, and they will hearken unto him in all that he desires.

“And at his word the sun will rise at night and he will make the moon to appear at the sixth hour. And all that he hath desired he will do in the world...and speak like the Beloved and he will say, ‘I am God and before me there has been none.’

“And all the people in the world will believe in him. And they will sacrifice to him and they will serve him...And after (one thousand) three hundred and thirty-two days the Lord will come with his angels and with the armies of the holy ones...and he will drag Beliar into Gehenna and also his armies.”²²⁸⁸

Similarly, John did not depict the armies of God engaging the enemy. Instead, the divine warrior on the white steed will seize the Antichrist.²²⁸⁹ John previously described the false prophet in terms of his functions. He will perform miracles and force people to receive the mark

²²⁸⁴Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text;jsessionid=3DDF615647A0DBAE5788C50EBD09314B?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0078%3Abook%3D15%3Achapter%3D44>.

²²⁸⁵Miriam T. Griffin, “Nero (Emperor),” *ABD* 4: 1076–80, 1080.

²²⁸⁶C. Suetonius Tranquillus, “Nero,” in *Suetonius: The Lives of the Twelve Caesars; an English Translation, Augmented with the Biographies of Contemporary Statesmen, Orators, Poets, and Other Associates* (ed. J. Eugene Reed; trans. Alexander Thomson; Philadelphia: Gebbie & Co., 1889), 57, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0132%3Alife%3Dnero%3Achapter%3D57>.

²²⁸⁷Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 968.

²²⁸⁸Charles, trans., “The Ascension of Isaiah,” in *APOT*, 4.2–14, 24–33, <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924014590529#page/n103/mode/2up>.

²²⁸⁹Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1065.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

of the beast (Rev 13:11–17).²²⁹⁰ The beast shall make claims of deity and the false prophet will enforce obligatory worship.²²⁹¹

However, this shall be their fate: “While living, these two were cast into the lake of fire which is burning with sulfur.” That statement evoked images of Gehenna in the minds of John’s original audience. Jesus referred to the burning trash dump outside of Jerusalem as a metaphor for the place of eternal punishment (Matt 5:22, 29–30; Matt 10:28; Matt 23:29–33).²²⁹²

Fire and sulfur also allude to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24–25),²²⁹³ as well as the judgment foretold for Gog and Magog (Ezek 38:18–22).²²⁹⁴ Within Israel, sulfur occurs in volcanic areas near the Dead Sea. A highly flammable substance, it produces an intensely hot and malodorous fire.²²⁹⁵ Divine judgment by fire occurred several times in the Old Testament (e.g. Lev 10:1–2; Num 16:35–38).²²⁹⁶ However, in the Bible, the notion of a lake of fire appears only in Revelation.²²⁹⁷

The Jewish apocryphal book of 1 Enoch (second century BC–first century AD) describes “a deep valley with burning fire. And they brought the kings and the mighty and began to cast them into this deep valley.”²²⁹⁸ Within the Greco-Roman milieu, the underworld of Hades contained a fiery river.²²⁹⁹

According to Plato (427–347 BC), “There are everlasting rivers of huge size under the earth, flowing with hot and cold water; and there is much fire, and great rivers of fire.”²³⁰⁰

Jesus will first cast the Antichrist and the false prophet into the inferno.²³⁰¹ John then reported, “the rest were killed by the sword of the one sitting on the horse, which came from his mouth, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.” In this case, “the rest” refers to the individuals prepared for battle against the Lord.²³⁰²

Jesus will kill them by his spoken word of divine retribution (Heb 4:12–13),²³⁰³ not by a literal sword (Zech 14:1–5, 12–15; 2 Thess 2:1–12). In effect, his sword represents a decree of death. Their final doom shall come when Christ pronounces their fate, saying, “Depart from me, those who have been cursed, into the eternal fire which had been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41; Rev 20:10–15).²³⁰⁴

The Essenes (2nd century BC–68 AD) of Qumran separated themselves from other Jewish people to pursue their ascetic practices.²³⁰⁵ They held this view of the end of the age:

²²⁹⁰Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 358–9.

²²⁹¹Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 969.

²²⁹²Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

²²⁹³Keener, *Revelation*, 455.

²²⁹⁴Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 969.

²²⁹⁵Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

²²⁹⁶Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1066.

²²⁹⁷Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

²²⁹⁸Charles, trans., “Book of Enoch,” in *APOT*, 54:1–2, 105,

<http://archive.org/stream/cu31924067146773#page/n219/mode/2up>.

²²⁹⁹Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1066–7.

²³⁰⁰Plato, “Phaedo,” in *Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 1* (trans. Harold North Fowler; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 111d,

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0170%3Atext%3DPhaedo%3Asection%3D111d>.

²³⁰¹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

²³⁰²Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1067.

²³⁰³Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

²³⁰⁴Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 970–1.

²³⁰⁵John J. Collins, “Essenes,” *ABD* 2:619–26, 621.

Gen 4–11 Chapter 7: God Opens the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 7:1–24) DT Plichta

“The Master shall bless the Prince of the Congregation...that he may establish the kingdom of his people forever, dispense justice...and that he may establish his holy covenant at the time of the affliction of those who seek God...[May you smite the peoples] with the might of your hand and ravage the earth with your scepter; may you bring death to the ungodly with the breath of your lips!...May [God] make your horns of iron and your hooves of bronze; may you toss like a young bull [and trample the peoples] like the mire of the streets!”²³⁰⁶

At last, the promised supper of God’s wrath will be ready (Ezek 39:4; Rev 19:17–18).²³⁰⁷ The enemies of Christ shall not receive a proper burial. Instead, birds of prey and scavengers will feast upon their flesh.²³⁰⁸ Jesus and his followers will finally experience complete victory over evil (Isa 66:22–24; Ps 110).²³⁰⁹

Read Rev 19:20–21. Why did believers in John’s era believe that Nero was the Antichrist? How did the judgment upon the beast and the false prophet fit with Jewish and Greco-Roman expectations? What will be the fate of those allied against Christ and his armies? How do the events of this passage resemble what the people in Noah’s generation experienced? In what ways do they differ? How does knowing this affect you?

²³⁰⁶Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 4th ed.*, 1Q28b Col. 5:20, 270, https://archive.org/stream/pdfy-Uy_BZ_QGsaLiJ4Zs/The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20%5BComplete%20English%20Translation%5D#page/n445/mode/2up.

²³⁰⁷Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359.

²³⁰⁸Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, 1068.

²³⁰⁹Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 359–60.