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# 3

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## The Eschatological Storyline of the Old Testament

*The Old Testament Focus on the Latter Days*

The preceding chapter attempted to trace the major themes of Gen. 1–3 throughout the OT, especially kingship in an inaugurated renewed creation that pointed to a consummated creation. The themes explored were essentially of an eschatological nature. That is, Adam was established as a priest-king in a pristine creation, but his kingship and the creation itself did not reach their destined goal of victory over evil and ultimate security against sin, against corruption of the body, and against corruption of the creation itself. This goal was eschatological in nature, since it is apparent that the eternal state would have commenced for Adam and creation once this objective was reached, and final judgment would have been pronounced and executed upon the primordial antagonist. Thus, in Eden there was the commencement of the first sinless world order that was yet incomplete and still needed consummation. In the preceding chapter I referred a few times to the notion that Adam's goal as a priest-king was to rule in a consummated eschatological creation in which the blessings of Eden would reach a final escalation. So here I want to reflect a bit more on the meaning of eschatology as it relates to Adam's goal.

In that Adam's establishment in the Eden temple as a priest-king reflecting God's glory was the beginning of the first created order, may we not say that it was also the very beginning of a process that was never eschatologically completed? Genesis 1–2 represented a condition of creation that was

subeschatological or even contained within it the seed that would sprout eschatologically. Thus, in Eden there was a beginning establishment of a priest-king in a sinless world order who was to be faithful and obedient to God *until that first creation was consummated*. On the one hand, the beginning of the first creation untainted by sin would be the inception of a process to be eschatologically completed through final glorification in incorruptibility. On the other hand, eschatology after Eden and the sin of humanity was to be redemptive eschatology consisting of both restoration from sin and consummation.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, the beginning of restoration from sin often is portrayed later as a restoration of Eden and a beginning new creation, which becomes an eschatological notion, as in, for example, Isa. 65:17; 66:22, as well as in Rev. 21:1–22:5. This restoration of Eden is not merely a return of the conditions of the prefall state but rather is the inauguration of the escalated and eternally consummated conditions of incorruptibility. The same phenomenon can be observed in Jewish apocalyptic literature and in the NT.<sup>2</sup> Looking at Gen. 1–2 in light of this later biblical notion of beginning new creation and its consummation allows one to perceive in the first two chapters of Genesis that consummative eschatology was a goal to be achieved by Adam. In this respect, we may say that eschatology originally preceded soteriology, but with the fall, eschatology is now restoration from sin followed by a consummation of an eternal new creation.

While it is not preferable to refer to prefall Eden as “semieschatological” or as an “inaugurated eschatological” condition, it is a condition that is to be brought to eschatological completion by God escalating the conditions and blessings of the prefall state into a permanent, indestructible creation. Thus, the original beatitude of Adam and Eve in Eden before sin contained “eschatological potential”<sup>3</sup> or an “increased earnest of [eschatological] fullness”<sup>4</sup> that was designed to be realized by permanently confirming them in their condition of blessedness.<sup>5</sup> In particular, the image of God in which Adam and Eve were created contained an eschatological latency that was to be actualized.<sup>6</sup> Their beginning life, while sinless though still capable of sin, was to be confirmed in eternal life.<sup>7</sup> Adam’s initial, original kingship and beginning reflection of God’s glory were to experience an “eschatological advance in kingdom glory.”<sup>8</sup> The same may be said of the environment of

1. Here I follow Geerhardus Vos, *The Eschatology of the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 74–75.

2. On which, see the section on Revelation 21 in chap. 19.

3. So Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 113.

4. *Ibid.*, 111 (the bracketed wording is mine).

5. *Ibid.*, 104.

6. *Ibid.*, 101; see also 96, 98, 111.

7. *Ibid.*, 114.

8. *Ibid.*, 104.

Eden and the earth before the onset of disobedience. The goal of the original Eden and Adam and Eve's covenantal order therein was that its beatitude was to be eschatologically perfected in greater blessedness.<sup>9</sup> The various features of this eschatological consummation have already been delineated in the first part of the preceding chapter.

This is to say that protology presupposes an eschatology, that a beginning implies an end.<sup>10</sup> Because of their unfaithfulness, Adam and Eve never reached the end. In subsequent Scripture we will see that the return and beginning escalation of the prefall Eden indeed can legitimately be called "inaugurated eschatology," and the final completion of that condition is consummated eschatology, when the old creation is destroyed and the new eternally established. From this retrospective vantage point, the original state of Adam and Eden becomes a prototype of the escalated conditions of new creation that appear to be introduced at repeated points in certain subsequent historical accounts in the OT era.<sup>11</sup> These apparent inaugurated eschatological episodes do not materialize in a consummated end-time state, and they themselves then come to be seen as eschatological prototypes by later OT writers. As I will argue later, at Christ's first coming there is an inaugurated end-time state that will effectually be culminated at his final advent into a permanently glorious new-creational kingdom. Accordingly, Adam's failure in Eden and the other OT patterns of new-creational start-ups and failures become typological foreshadowings of what finally is successfully accomplished in Christ (see, e.g., Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45).

The question about the viability of the foregoing description of Eden is whether there can be discerned in Gen. 1–3 a process leading to an eschatological culmination or escalation of conditions, or whether Adam and Eve would have merely continued to live in the very same conditions eternally if they had remained faithful. I have argued that the former is most probable.<sup>12</sup>

Some define eschatology narrowly as "the end of this world's time . . . a consummation of the historical process in events which lie beyond the scope of the world's history."<sup>13</sup> As we will see, most definitions of OT eschatology focus on conditions that have significant and decisively irreversible discontinuities with the prior sinful course of history, where there will be radically transformed people (forgiven and newly created), society (restored Israel and

9. Ibid., 101.

10. See Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker, 2 vols., OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961–67), 2:110. Eichrodt says that the commission "be fruitful and multiply" in Gen. 1:28 "subordinates Man to the mighty teleological world movement," and that possibly even "*b'rē'šit*, in the beginning" already conveys the notion of "distant goal of the world process, the '*ah'rit hayyāmim*, the end of days."

11. On these repeated episodes, see table 2.2 in chap. 2.

12. On which, see the initial section of chap. 2 on Gen. 1–3.

13. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 2 vols., OTL (New York: Harper, 1962–65), 2:114. Von Rad cites some who hold this position.

nations led by a messianic figure and centered in Zion), and nature (renewed creation).<sup>14</sup> This is a helpful definition, but it means that eschatology is only about future conditions, whereas I have suggested the possibility that there may be in the OT itself a temporary sense of inaugurated eschatology or semieschatological conditions that can exist prior to their consummated, future form. While I think this is the case, such apparent eschatological conditions never eventuate into true, decisively irreversible conditions until the first coming of Christ.

Accordingly, I made an effort in the preceding chapter to show how this apparent “already and not yet” end-time idea was developed at points throughout the OT. For example, the major episodes of OT history were seen to be reiterations, to varying significant degrees, of the pattern of beginning kingship in a beginning new creation. Thus, these subsequent episodes in the OT represent events that have the appearance of commencing an end-time process that is never completed. In the postfall sinful cosmos, in contrast to prefall Eden, it seems more understandable that the beginning process of restoration from sin would be charged with notions of a commencement toward an eschatological consummation. This is the case, as we saw in the preceding chapter, with Isaiah’s prophecy of new creation, which is portrayed as a part of Israel’s return from exile (though Isaiah portrays it as an apparently single event and not an extended new-creational process).<sup>15</sup> We will see below that prophecies of Israel’s restoration from exile are said explicitly to take place “in the latter days” (Deut. 4:30; 31:29; Hos. 3:5; and possibly Jer. 23:20; 30:24, the latter especially in light of 31:1–40).

Nevertheless, the definition of eschatology as that of a later period with significant irreversible discontinuities with an earlier period would fit my definition of primeval eschatology in Eden. Even though the preconsummate stage in Eden was without the contamination of sin, it was to reach a completed and irreversible stage that was significantly different because of the following escalated conditions, which were elaborated in the first part of the preceding chapter:

1. victory over evil;
2. ultimate security against committing sin;
3. protection from corruption of the body;
4. protection from corruption of the creation;
5. as I will argue later, even marriage itself was to be transcended, since it likely was a foreshadowing of the unity humanity was to have with God in the eternal state.<sup>16</sup>

14. See, e.g., Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

15. On which, see chap. 16 below on new creation and reconciliation.

16. On which, see chap. 26 below on new creation and marriage.

Other OT episodes subsequent to Eden also appear to be reinstating the conditions of Eden and marching toward a final consummation, but they never reach it. Such potential but failed eschatological-like narratives come to be seen by subsequent OT narrators and the NT as patterns foreshadowing the eschaton that will indeed finally come to pass at some future point.

This chapter also looks at key aspects of eschatology in the OT, though the focus is on end-time expectations of the future, especially as these are expressed through the phrase “latter days” and its various synonyms. As in the prior chapter, there is no intent to be exhaustive; rather, I examine only those expressions that are overtly eschatological. This means that OT passages containing end-time *concepts* but without the precise language are not surveyed here.<sup>17</sup> The purpose in this and the following two chapters is to look at the explicit “latter-day” language in order to see how that language is alluded to and developed in Judaism and in the NT. We will see that there are intertextual relationships between the wording of these expressions within the OT itself. Although the survey in this chapter is selective and limited, we will see that analysis of texts with the explicit language of the eschaton addresses virtually all the future promises of the OT that are expressed conceptually elsewhere but without the technical eschatological terminology.

The relevant passages are surveyed in the order that they would have been perceived to have been written from the standpoint of the NT writers, since that is the ultimate perspective of concern in this book.

## The Latter Days in the Old Testament

### *Genesis 49:1*

The first place an explicit expression of “latter days” occurs is Gen. 49:1, where Jacob’s prophecy about the destiny of his twelve sons and their descendants is introduced by him saying, “Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the latter days [*bě’ahārīt hayyāmīm*].” Much of what he predicts does not appear to be explicitly eschatological but merely descriptive of the future of the tribes of Israel. The prophetic pronouncements may be fulfilled at various stages of the history of the twelve tribes within the OT epoch itself. Because of this observation, translations render the last phrase as “in the days to come,” and, accordingly, some scholars conclude that it indicates only the indefinite future and has nothing to do with any explicit notion of eschatology.<sup>18</sup>

17. E.g., we could survey the many eschatological references to “day” in the prophets (usually referring to a time of judgment), but the present survey of more explicit eschatological language will be sufficient to cover the basic range of eschatological concepts found in the OT, though various subcategories within this range will not be elaborated.

18. Along these lines, see G. W. Buchanan, “Eschatology and the ‘End of Days,’” *JNES* 20 (1961): 188–93, esp. 189; J. P. M. Van Der Ploeg, “Eschatology in the Old Testament,” in *The*



I have argued that Gen. 1–3 already contains an expectation of consummate eschatological notions, even though technical eschatological expressions do not occur there. The same may be the case in Gen. 49, though there an explicit eschatological expression does occur.

But the storyline of Genesis and Exodus needs to be remembered at this point in order to have a full contextual sense of what “latter days” means: (1) Adam and Eve before their sin were part of an original sinless creation in Eden that was designed to “end” in a consummated eternal and glorified state of new creation; (2) Noah was a second Adam, emerging out of the chaotic flood, who was given the same commission as the first Adam in a beginning renewed creation that was designed to “end” in a consummated eternal and glorified condition of new creation; (3) Israel was designed to be a corporate Adam, emerging out of the plague chaos of Egypt and in a beginning new creation of the exodus, taking residence again in another garden of Eden (the promised land) and obeying the mandate that the first Adam should have obeyed and finally achieving complete eternal rest in a glorified new creation.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Genesis and Exodus portray history as a repeated cycle of new-creational commencements that never reach their designed eschatological goal of irreversibly completed and incorruptible new-creational conditions. Hence, the first creation is a process that is designed to “end” with the successful obedience of that figure, who receives the reward of living in a glorified and incorruptible state of new creation.

Genesis 49 is to be viewed within the framework of these cyclical eschatological-like movements, in particular as the first extended prophecy of the third cycle (after the Adamic and Noahic cycles) involving the nation Israel. Although parts of Jacob’s discourse are opaque and, at the same time, positive (e.g., vv. 13, 19–21, 27), it is apparent that he prophetically narrates how some of his sons and their seed would fail in carrying out this mandate. An inference from the wider narrative context is that all the tribes of Israel, except for Judah, that fail in doing their corporate part in following the original mandate likely fail to some degree in the way that Adam did. This suggests that up to the point of their failure they were involved in an apparent process of restorative new

*Witness of Tradition: Papers Read at the Joint British-Dutch Old Testament Conference Held at Woudschoten, 1970*, ed. A. S. Van Der Woude, OtSt 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 89–99; A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 156–57. S. R. Driver similarly but more generally describes the use of the expression to denote “the final period of the future so far as it falls within the range of the speaker’s perspective,” so that context defines the use in each case (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, ICC [1895; repr., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], 74).

19. Both directly preceding Noah’s exit from the ark and Israel’s exit from Egypt there are “chaos” conditions intentionally comparable to the initial chaos of Gen. 1:2. For example, each plague of Egypt is a corresponding antithesis of something that was created in Gen. 1, so that the chaos is a condition of de-creation (on which, see chap. 2 under the heading “The Repeated Cosmic Judgment and New Creation Episodes of the Old Testament”).

creation and rule that was designed to culminate in a successful eschatological climax.<sup>20</sup> However, this process of restoration then ceases when corporate sin and judgment occur, though even the stage of judgment<sup>21</sup> anticipates a final climactic judgment at the very end of history.<sup>22</sup>

One of Jacob's descendants, however, clearly will carry out this mandate to extend the divine kingdom over the earth. In Gen. 49 Judah is prophesied to be victor over all his enemies (vv. 8a, 11–12)<sup>23</sup> and to be the leading tribe in Israel (v. 8b). He will be mighty as a lion (v. 9) and will rule *until all the nations become obedient* to him (v. 10). This is not some mere victory in a few local battles in Canaan but rather decisive and ultimate victory over all possible enemies of Israel. That this is not merely about subduing all the nations living in Canaan but probably is an ultimately universal reference is apparent when we recall that Israel was to be a corporate Adam fulfilling the universal earthly mandate in Gen. 1:28.

Therefore, this indicates a climactic and irreversible point in history and thus represents an eschatological zenith of Jacob's prophecy.<sup>24</sup> According to Gen. 49, this prophesied king from Judah will lead the entire nation in finally doing what Adam should have done (vv. 9–10), especially in defeating the satanic eschatological enemy,<sup>25</sup> and being rewarded with living in climactic conditions of a renewed creation (vv. 11–12). This is the "final" point of history toward which Jacob's prophecy focuses. Descriptions of the destiny of the other tribes may have appeared telescoped or condensed from Jacob's perspective, so that they could have been seen as events happening directly before and leading up

20. E.g., see this with respect to the prophecies especially about Zebulon, Gad, Asher, and Joseph, though these prophecies are still ambiguous.

21. The vague reference to the judgment of Simeon and Levi could be "thick" enough to include the final end-time judgment of Israel as a nation, which Matt. 23:29–39 narrates as occurring in the generation that was accountable for putting Jesus to death.

22. In this respect, Adam's judgment, the Genesis flood, and Israel's judgment are applied analogically, and probably typologically, by the NT to prophecies of the final judgment. See, e.g., for Adam's judgment, the "hiding" of Rev. 6:16b as an allusion to Gen. 3:8; for the Genesis flood, Matt. 24:35–39; 2 Pet. 3:5–7; see also Rev. 17:16 as an allusion to Israel's judgment by way of allusion to Ezek. 16:39; 23:29.

23. Genesis 49:11–12 appears also to express the fruitfulness in the sphere of a peaceful renewed creation ruled over by Judah's end-time king (see similar imagery in 49:22, 25–26). Isaiah 63:1–3 alludes to Gen. 49:11c–d and views it as imagery of God as a warrior defeating the enemy nations (on which, see further G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 958–60).

24. John Walton notes that the phrase usually translated "until" in the third line of Gen. 49:10 is not the usual expression for "until" (which is 'ad) but rather is wording ('ad kî) that connotes a climax and could be rendered "at last Shiloh will come" (*Genesis*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan], 714–15); so likewise Vos, *Eschatology of the Old Testament*, 92, 103.

25. The phrase in Gen. 4:7, contextually applied to Cain in his defeat by evil, ". . . be lifted up . . . Sin is crouching [*rābaš*] at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must rule over it," appears to be reapplied in 49:9 to Judah's king (" . . . you have gone up. He couches, he lies down [*rābaš*] as a lion, and as a lion who dares rouse him up?"), who conquers all opposition in 49:8–12.

to and, therefore, linked with that of the climactic end-time rule of Judah. In this respect, the other tribes find their ultimate eschatological destiny in Judah: “Judah, your brothers shall praise you. . . . Your father’s sons shall bow down to you” (v. 8). This may be illustrated by the apparently negative prophecy about Dan’s future sin (“Dan shall be a serpent in the way . . . that bites”), which concludes with “For your salvation I wait, O LORD” (vv. 17–18). The end-time “waiting” appears to refer to the expectation about the tribe of Judah’s ultimate victory (vv. 9–12). Thus, at least, in that the other eleven tribes will find their final end-time success bound up with that of Judah, the initial reference to “the latter days” refers to all the tribes.

This climax of history fits the definition of eschatology proposed above in that conditions are reached that have significant discontinuity with the preceding era, and such conditions appear to be irreversible: whereas Israel was beset by opposition from enemy nations during most of its history, Gen. 49:8–12 pictures a period in which Judah will defeat all enemies and bring about their “obedience.” In this sense, all the prophesied events of Gen. 49 would roughly fit the pattern of the Gen. 1–3 perspective, where a process occurs with both a beginning and an intended eschatological culmination. Although many cite Brown, Driver, and Briggs’s definition of “in the end of days” in support of a reference to a mere “indefinite non-eschatological future” in Gen. 49:1, this definition could fit well within the contours of the approach here: “a prophetic phrase denoting the final period of the history so far as the speaker’s perspective reaches; the sense thus varies with the context, but it often = the ideal or Messianic future.”<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Driver adds elsewhere that the phrase denotes “the final period of the future so far as it falls within the range of the speaker’s perspective,” so that context defines the use in each case.<sup>27</sup> These two definitions admirably fit within the present perspective because they can easily be viewed to describe well ancient prophecies of various aspects of the eschaton at an early stage of redemptive history and progressive revelation, though Brown, Driver, and Briggs unlikely perceived their comments within such a more explicit biblical-theological framework.

Accordingly, Jacob’s prophecy is similar, in a sense, to inhabitants of another planet in a spaceship some distance from the earth. They can see with the naked eye the earth and its various shades of white, blue, green, and brown (representing clouds, bodies of water, and land masses). They radio back to their home planet and describe what they see from this distance. It does not appear to the naked eye that there is much distance between the spacecraft and the final destination of earth, only empty space and a few other planets and stars stand between them. When their spaceship approaches closer to the earth, however, the stars and planets are better recognized as actually far

26. BDB 31a.

27. Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 74, for virtually the same definition.

from earth after all. Then when their spacecraft reaches earth and begins to descend into the atmosphere over, say, New York City, they are able to make out the rivers, forests, valleys, and particularly the city, buildings, houses, streets, cars, and people. Both the distant and the close-up views are “literal.” The close-up picture reveals details that someone with only a distant view could not have seen. The close-up view even offers what looks like a different reality from the one seen from the distant vantage point. Nevertheless, both are literal depictions of what is actually there. Jacob’s focus on the distant, prophetic climactic destination of Judah’s reign is compacted together with other events involving other tribes that appear to him perhaps close to and leading directly up to the historical end-time climax, but as redemptive-historical revelation develops, these other events take place long before the zenith point in Judah is reached (just as the planets and stars are finally seen to be farther from earth than formerly perceived).

The picture of Jacob’s prophecy depicts events that are moving toward a final, historical consummation, and this may be one reason that even they can be included, together with the Judah prophecy, under the rubric of what will happen “in the latter days.” Jacob’s prophetic portrait is magnified by the various intertextual developments of it by subsequent OT writers in later times (which we will see presently below), which enlarges the details of the initial “thick” prophetic portrait of what “will befall” the tribes of Israel “in the latter days” (Gen. 49:1). Jacob’s vantage point becomes sharpened and the details clarified, indeed, magnified. As we will soon see, NT revelation further clarifies and magnifies the OT portrait of the Judah prophecy and how it was specifically fulfilled in Christ<sup>28</sup> (which is comparable to the space travelers seeing the full clarity of New York City). It is for this reason that Jacob can refer to the entire vision as pertaining to events to take place “in the latter days.” In fact, not only do parts of Jacob’s prophecy begin end-time fulfillment in the “lion of Judah” in the NT, but also already in the OT the destinies of some of Israel’s tribes are referred to as occurring “in the latter days,” as we will soon see in this very chapter. Thus, the actual plural form of “latter days” may refer to some degree to an extended eschatological period composed of several events, whereas the singular “end” or “last” refers more to the definitive end (e.g., see Job 19:25; Isa. 46:10), a distinction that we will find also in the NT use of the two phrases (though there are exceptions to the pattern in both Testaments).<sup>29</sup>

Another end-time aspect of Jacob’s prophecy concerns Joseph, though it is more vague than the prediction about Judah. With new-creational imagery

28. Bruce K. Waltke sees the expression “the latter days” of Gen. 49:1 as having a “thickness” of expression that “embraces the entire history of Israel from the conquest and distribution of the land to the consummate reign of Jesus Christ” (*Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 605). See similarly, Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1988), 700.

29. See, e.g., Dan. 12:13.

that likely derives from reflections on Gen. 1:28 and the garden of Eden in Gen. 2, the career of Joseph and the destiny of his descendants are described in Gen. 49:22, 25–26:

Joseph is a fruitful bough,  
 A fruitful bough by a spring;  
 Its branches run over a wall. . . .  
 From the God of your father who helps you,  
 And by the Almighty who blesses you  
 With blessings of heaven above,  
 Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,  
 Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.  
 The blessings of your father  
 Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors  
 Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;  
 May they be on the head of Joseph,  
 And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his  
 brothers.

Joseph’s portrayal as a “fruitful bough by a spring” echoes the trees bearing fruit in Eden that were watered by the source in the midst of the garden. The fecundity of the first garden is applied to the fruitfulness and prosperity of Joseph and his children (a precursor of Ps. 1:3). The sixfold blessing pronounced on Joseph in verses 25–26 affirms that both literal fecundity of the womb and general prosperity are in mind, which also seems to be a development of the initial blessing of Gen. 1:28.<sup>30</sup>

God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The double use of the participial form of “bear fruit” (*pārâ*) in verse 22<sup>31</sup> followed by the repeated mention of “blessing” in verses 25–26 also reflects the close placement of “bless” and “bear fruit” in Gen. 1:28. There is even evocation of “filling the earth” prosperously in the mention that “the blessings of your father [Jacob’s blessing on Joseph] have surpassed the blessings of my [Jacob’s] ancestors [beginning with Adam] up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.” Although Adam had failed to possess full end-time blessings, Joseph received them at some point in the future. Although an end-time

30. So also Waltke, *Genesis*, 614.

31. Though see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 678–79, 683. Hamilton understands the Hebrew word that many see behind “fruit” to be *pere*, “wild donkey.” His full discussion is, I think, plausible though unpersuasive.

climax is not as clear here as in the Judah prophecy, the Joseph prophecy may overlap with its fulfillment in conjunction with the Judah prophecy because it is so saturated with new-creational motifs related also to Joseph's descendants that a culminating eschatological notion of a renewed creation is likely elicited. Furthermore, the reference to "surpassing the blessings . . . up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills" may suggest not some figuratively vague future condition but rather a zenith point of blessings beyond which no more blessing can be given and that will not be reversible.

Consequently, the expression *bē'ahārīt hayyāmīm* in Gen. 49:1 is to be rendered "in the latter days," referring to Israel's movement in eventually fulfilling what Adam was commanded to do<sup>32</sup> in a renewed and eschatologically consummated Eden (*Tg. Neof.* Gen. 49:1 adds that the latter days about which Jacob was prophesying included "what the happiness of Eden is"; so also *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen. 49:1). This history will be marked with some of the tribes participating in unsuccessful small-scale attempts to fulfill the Adamic commission, which do not reach eschatological completion until the ruler "comes to whom it [the kingdom] belongs,<sup>33</sup> and to him will be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen. 49:10c–d [my translation]).<sup>34</sup> In this respect, the destiny of the other Israelite tribes that fail in fulfilling their Adamic mandate continues to leave open the necessity for fulfilling it and thus comes to point forward typologically to that eschatological time when it will finally be carried out. Thus, "the latter days" refers not to the future in general but rather to the final outcome of future events, involving all of Israel's tribes, which dovetails in Judah.<sup>35</sup>

32. See C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 1 of *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 387. They take a similar approach and view the concept of eschatology in Gen. 49:1–27 as referring to the "future as bringing the work of God to its ultimate completion, though modified by the particular age to which the work of God had advanced in any particular age." See similarly Waltke, *Genesis*, 605; likewise H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1942), 2:1167.

33. This is in line with the paraphrastic rendering of Qumran (4Q252 V:1–5) and with the way the LXX reads the Hebrew ("until there come the things stored up for him").

34. Genesis 49:10c, one of the longest-debated Hebrew phrases in Genesis, may also be translated "until tribute comes to him" or "until Shiloh comes" or, less probably, "until he comes to Shiloh" (for discussion of the options, see Hamilton, *Genesis*, 658–61; Walton, *Genesis*, 714–16). For a discussion of the various interpretations, see Vos, *Eschatology of the Old Testament*, 89–104. Vos takes it as an eschatological messianic prophecy, in line with my conclusion, as does also, e.g., Waltke (*Genesis*, 609) and Ross (*Creation and Blessing*, 703–4). All three commentators also favor the translation "he comes to whom it belongs," though, as seen just above, there are other translation options that would not exclude an ultimate eschatological messianic interpretation. Any of these translations, in this context, would express the coming of a kingly figure to rule. The LXX viewed Gen. 49:10d to be messianic: "he is the expectation of the nations." As we saw above, *Tg. Onq.* Gen. 49:9–11 applies the text to the end-time Messiah and his universal rule.

35. So also Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (1930; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1979), 2–3. See H. Seebass, "תַּיְהוֹמָיִם," *TDOT* 1:211; his same conclusion about the phrase in Dan. 2:28 has influenced the conclusion here.

We will see below that the earliest interpretation of Gen. 49:10, Num. 24:14–19, understands it to be an eschatological event in which an Israelite king gains victory over foes. The eschatological meaning of Gen. 49:1 is attested not only by Judaism but also by the NT, since the NT understands parts of Jacob’s following prophecy in Gen. 49 to be eschatological and the beginning fulfillment in Christ’s first coming. Romans 1:4–5; 16:25–26 allude to Gen. 49:10 (see table 3.1).<sup>36</sup>

Table 3.1

Genesis 49:10	Romans 1:4–5 (cf. almost identically 16:25–26)
“ <u>Unto him</u> [the coming Israelite conqueror] will be <u>the obedience of the nations</u> .”	“ <u>Jesus Christ</u> . . . through whom we received grace and apostleship <u>unto the obedience of faith among all the nations</u> .”

Likewise Rev. 5:5 (“the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah . . . has overcome”) applies Gen. 49:9 to Jesus’s resurrection, which inaugurated the end-time prophecy of the final resurrection.

**Numbers 24:14**

The second appearance of the expression “in the latter days” is in Num. 24:14: “And now, behold, I [Balaam] am going to my people; come, and I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days to come [*bē’ahārīt hayyāmîm*].” As in Gen. 49:1, the phrase here is not merely a vague reference to the future but rather is an eschatological reference, which is indicated by its connection to Gen. 49, the context of the phrase in Num. 24, and its use in later biblical and extrabiblical literature. As mentioned earlier, this passage and its immediate context allude to Gen. 49:1, which is evident from the following:

1. Virtually the same wording in Gen. 49:9 occurs in Num. 24:9: “He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him?”
2. The term “scepter” is used in Gen. 49:10 and Num. 24:17.
3. Both the Genesis and Numbers texts identify their respective prophecies to be about “the latter days” (cf. Num. 24:14).
4. Numbers 24:8, like Gen. 49, explicitly refers to the “nations” as Israel’s enemies who are to be defeated.
5. Just as the prophecy of Israel’s future conqueror in Gen. 49 is directly linked to new-creational imagery (vv. 11–12, as well as vv. 22, 25–26),

36. For discussion of the validity and use of this allusion, see G. K. Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, JSNTSup 166 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 238–42.

so is the case in Num. 24 (cf. vv. 7b–9 with vv. 5–7a). Numbers 24:5–7a says,

How fair are your tents, O Jacob,<sup>37</sup>  
Your dwellings, O Israel!<sup>38</sup>  
Like palm trees that stretch out,  
Like gardens beside the river,  
Like aloes planted by the LORD,<sup>39</sup>  
Like cedars beside the waters.  
Water will flow from his buckets,  
And his seed will be by many waters.

The depiction of Num. 24:5–8 is also associated with the Abrahamic promise (cf. an increase of “seed” in v. 7; the “blessing and cursing” in v. 9 repeats Gen. 12:3b). There may also be an echo of the original Adamic commission (note “king” and “kingdom” in v. 7 and “dominion” in v. 19) and of the manner in which the promised seed in Gen. 3:15 (“he shall bruise you on the head”) is to defeat the divine enemy (cf. “a scepter . . . shall crush through the forehead of Moab” in Num. 24:17).

The climactic point of Balaam’s discourse to Balak comes in Num. 24:17–19, where a messianic-like king from Israel will defeat its enemies:

I see him, but not now;  
I behold him, but not near;  
A star shall come forth from Jacob,  
A scepter shall rise from Israel,  
And shall crush through the forehead of Moab,  
And tear down all the sons of Sheth.  
Edom shall be a possession,  
Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession,  
While Israel performs valiantly.  
One from Jacob shall have dominion,  
And will destroy the remnant from the city.

37. *Targum Neofiti* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* render the Hebrew of this line partly as “How beautiful is the tent of meeting,” thus clearly identifying the “tents” as Israel’s tabernacle.

38. On analogy with later OT texts referring to the temple in the plural, the same may well be the case in Num. 24:5. Furthermore, when these two Hebrew words for “tent” and “dwelling” occur together everywhere else in the Pentateuch (so 25x up to Num. 24), only once (Num. 16:27, in the plural) do they refer generally to Israel’s dwellings around the tabernacle, and twenty-four times they refer to the tabernacle. If “tents” and “dwellings” in Num. 24:5 are plural references to the tabernacle, then this is a passage explaining Israel’s task by linking a portrayal of Israel as a tabernacle with the picture of vegetation and waters spreading out over the earth, which is likely rooted in the Gen. 2 portrayal of Eden as a garden sanctuary. On this, see further G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 66–126.

39. The LXX here reads “as tabernacles [or ‘tents’] pitched by the Lord,” on which see further below.



Part of this prophecy (“Edom shall be a possession”) is alluded to in Amos 9:12a (“that they [Israel] possess the remnant of Edom”), which is a prophecy of Israel’s end-time defeat of the nations at the time of Israel’s restoration (Amos 9:11) to the land, which is described in paradisaical language, much like that in Gen. 49:11–12 and Num. 24:6–7.<sup>40</sup> Amos 9:11–12 is quoted in Acts 15:16–18 to explain the gospel’s relationship to the gentiles and how Amos 9 has begun fulfillment.

Both Judaism and the NT identify this figure with the Messiah and his eschatological defeat of God’s enemy.<sup>41</sup> Revelation 2:28 (“and I will give him [the overcomer] the morning star”) and 22:16 (“I am . . . the bright morning star”) allude to Num. 24:17 and apply it to Christ (as does possibly 2 Pet. 1:19).<sup>42</sup> This shows that the early Christian community understood “the latter days” of the Num. 24 prophecy commencing fulfillment with the first coming of Christ.<sup>43</sup>

#### *Deuteronomy 4:30; 31:29*

The next occurrences of the phrase “the latter days” are in Deuteronomy. After Israel commits idolatry, God will expel them from their land and scatter them throughout the nations, from where they will seek God (4:25–29). At this time, “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days [*bě’ahārīt hayyāmīm*] you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice” (4:30). Here “the latter days” includes both the distress that is to come upon Israel and its returning to God as a result of that distress. The basis for Israel’s return to God lies in that he will not “forget the covenant with your fathers which he swore to them” (4:31). This covenant, of course, is the covenant made with the patriarchs, the core of which, as I have argued earlier, is a repetition of Gen. 1:28. Thus, this covenant involves a mandate to the patriarchs and Israel to do what Adam should have done and a promise that their seed will ultimately carry this out to bless the world and spread God’s glory throughout the earth. And, as I have also contended, the concluding fulfillment of this mandate in Gen. 1:28 is eschatological in nature, which is in mind in 4:30, as it refers to Israel “returning” in faith to fulfill this covenant.

40. Cf. Amos 9:13–15: “The mountains will drip sweet wine. . . . They [Israel] will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. . . . They will not again be rooted out from their land.”

41. See, e.g., 4Q266 frg. 3, III:18–21; *Tg. Onq.* Num. 24:17; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Num. 24:14; Num. 24:17 in particular was interpreted messianically in early Jewish writings: *T. Levi* 18:3; *T. Jud.* 24:1; CD-A VII:18–21; 1QM XI:6–7; in later Judaism, see *y. Ta’an.* 4.5. It is well known that “Bar Kokhba” (“Son of the Star”) was the name of a messianic figure in the final Jewish uprising against Rome early in the second century AD, but his movement was defeated.

42. On which, see further Beale, *Revelation*, 268–69.

43. So also Num. 24:17 is understood the same way by Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 106) and Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.9.2).

Commentators sometimes do not see Deut. 4:30 as “eschatological.”<sup>44</sup> However, if I am correct in linking this verse with the pattern that begins in the early chapters of Genesis and is repeated, and if this pattern is eschatological, then Deut. 4:30 can be considered so. Other commentators consider Israel’s restoration to the land in repentance<sup>45</sup> to be eschatological because conditions inextricably linked with that restoration are a radical break with prior conditions.<sup>46</sup>

Consequently, Deut. 4:30 understands that Israel’s judgment and exile for not fulfilling its part of the covenant and its return to begin to fulfill its covenantal obligations again are eschatological. This is why the repeated reference later in Deut. 31:29 is to be understood as part of an end-time process: “For I know that after my [Moses’s] death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days [*bē’ahārīt hayyāmîm*], for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands.” Although, more precisely, exile has been construed to be part of a de-creation pattern, it may be viewed also either as an eschatological-like judgment against violation of the Adamic mandate or a judgment anticipating the final judgment of exile from God’s presence and the consummated form of the cosmos. This is the idea in Deut. 31:29, though likely an intense time of tribulation toward the end of exile may be the focus, so that the “latter days” there presumably overlap with the conclusion of the exilic period, when the “return” of Deut. 4:30 begins (cf. Ps. 107:6, 13).<sup>47</sup> However, since Israel’s restoration from Babylon after seventy years of exile did not eventuate in truly decisive and irreversible eschatological conditions of new creation, the end-time prophecy of Deut. 4 and Deut. 31 still awaited a future time when Israel would again do eschatological evil and then repent and turn to God. Accordingly, Israel’s sin, exile, and restoration would become a historical pattern pointing to the true eschaton, a perspective that, as we will see, is taken up by NT writers.

44. So, e.g., Peter C. Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 140; J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC 5 (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 111.

45. The use of “return” (*šûb*) in Deut. 4:30 in this context likely carries the pregnant notion of both return to the land physically and return to God spiritually, as it does in similar contexts, especially in the prophets. If repentance is mainly in mind, then physical return is implicit, since the land represented blessings for Israel; if physical return is primarily the focus, then repentance is implied, since Israel could truly return to the land only by repentance.

46. See, e.g., Gowan, *Eschatology*, 21–27. Note that *Tg. Neof.* Deut. 4:30 specifies that the “very end of the days” is what is in mind.

47. Joshua 24:27 reads, “And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God.’” The Greek version paraphrases this conclusion as “And this [stone] shall be among you for a witness in the latter days [*ep’ eschatōn tōn hēmerōn*], at the time when you deal falsely with the Lord my God,” apparently interpreting in line with Deut. 31:29 and applying “latter days” to a time of Israel’s eschatological apostasy.

*Hosea 3:5*

Hosea 3:4 depicts a time when the people of Israel will endure a period of captivity when no Israelite king will rule over them (they will be “without king or prince”), they will not have the benefits of their temple (they will be “without sacrifice”), and they will not have the benefits of the functions of a priest (they will be “without ephod”), presumably because of the temple’s destruction. Consequently, they will not even have opportunity to defile their temple worship as they previously had done (they will be without “sacred pillar,” likely an idolatrous object, and “household idols”). The next verse, however, says that “afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the latter days [*bě’ahārît hayyāmîm*]” (Hos. 3:5). An eschatological time will come when God will restore Israel from captivity and reinstall Davidic kingship, and the nation will trust in God (so also Hos. 1:10–11; 2:21–23).<sup>48</sup> The implication from 3:4 is that God will also reestablish the temple for worship (note that the introductory “afterward” [*’ahar*] in 3:5 is a parallel expression with “in the latter days” [*bě’ahārît hayyāmîm*], which suggests that “afterward” and other synonymous expressions elsewhere in the prophets are eschatologically charged; cf., e.g., *’ahărê-kēn* in Joel 2:28 [3:1 MT]).<sup>49</sup>

Hosea elsewhere has close connections with the covenant cursings and blessings of Deuteronomy, and the reference to “in the latter days” in Hos. 3:5 appears to pick up and develop the earlier identical reference in Deut. 4:30 (cf. 30:29), which predicts the blessings for Israel in the end time.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the validity of Hosea’s allusion to Deut. 4:30 is apparent from the observation that the combined Hebrew wording of “return to the LORD their [or your] God” + “in the latter days” occurs nowhere else in the OT except these two passages.

*Isaiah*

Isaiah 2:2 contains the identical phrase “in the latter days” as in the preceding OT verses. In line with Hosea, and possibly under its influence, Isaiah focuses on God’s kingship and temple that will be established “in the latter days.” Whereas it is not clear whether the Deuteronomy texts are alluding to the earlier Genesis or Numbers or Hosea texts, Isa. 2:2 appears to be developing Gen. 49:1, 10, where at the eschatological zenith of the “latter

48. For a similar conclusion, see Duane Garrett, *Hosea, Joel*, NAC 19A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 104.

49. Here I also have in mind eschatologically charged expressions such as Isa. 1:26; Jer. 49:6 (cf. with Jer. 48:47); similarly Jer. 31:33; Dan. 2:28–29.

50. So Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, WBC 31 (Waco: Word, 1987), 68. Stuart also sees Hos. 3:5 as a classic end-time prophecy of the Messiah that began fulfillment in Christ.

days” “the obedience of the peoples [*ammîm*]” will be given to the king of Israel. Isaiah 2:2–3 likewise views “the peoples [*ammîm*]” coming to Jerusalem in subservience to God and his law. The only places in the OT where the subservience of the “peoples” (*ammîm*) appears together with “in the latter days” (*bē’ahārît hayyāmîm*) are Gen. 49:1, 10; Isa. 2:2–3; Mic. 4:1 (on which, see directly below). Isaiah also portrays “the mountain of the house of the LORD” being “established as the chief of the mountains,” which is part of an eschatological hope that Israel’s temple would begin to be expanded in the eschaton.<sup>51</sup> Another explicit eschatological feature is that there will no longer be war on the earth (Isa. 2:4). In light of this passage, which predicts the permanent end of strife among nations in history, it is difficult to understand why some commentators see a reference to an indeterminate future without any eschatological sense.<sup>52</sup> This latter-day prophecy appeared to begin fulfillment with Israel’s restoration from Babylonian captivity but did not find fulfillment in all the other associated promises (eschatological temple, pilgrimage of gentiles to Jerusalem, etc.). Therefore, this prophecy still awaited true inaugurated and irreversible fulfillment with the events of Christ’s coming.<sup>53</sup>

Acts 2:17 alludes to the “latter days” of Isa. 2:2 (both read *estai en tais eschatais hēmerais*, an expression occurring nowhere else in the LXX or the NT). Acts interprets Joel 2:28–32, its main focus text, by Isa. 2:2.<sup>54</sup> Apparently, Joel’s promise of the Spirit for Israel is being anticipated as a promise to be fulfilled among gentiles, which the remainder of Acts will narrate (e.g., Acts 10:44–47). Furthermore, the promise of an expanding temple in Isaiah is viewed as beginning fulfillment with the outpouring and expansion of the divine Spirit.<sup>55</sup> Revelation 15:4 pictures the final fulfillment of the Isa. 2:2 prophecy about the nations coming to the Lord in connection also with the revelation of the eschatological temple (Rev. 15:5: “And after these

51. On which, see Beale, *Temple*, 81–167.

52. As does, e.g., Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–12*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd ed., OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 53.

53. Bruce K. Waltke argues this for the Mic. 4:1 prophecy, which is parallel to Isa. 2:2 (“Micah,” in vol. 2 of *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993], 679).

54. Some Greek manuscripts of Joel 2:28 also read *en tais eschatais hēmerais*, probably under the influence of Isa. 2:2 (Theodoret II. 183 et al. [according to the Holmes and Parsons LXX apparatus]), which shows that the interpretative move in Acts 2:17 had already been made by some scribes when copying the Greek of Joel (though the variant could have arisen by Christian scribes copying Joel under the influence of Acts 2:17).

55. On which, see further G. K. Beale, “The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost: Part I,” *TynBul* 56, no. 1 (2005): 73–102; idem, “The Descent of the Eschatological Temple in the Form of the Spirit at Pentecost: Part II,” *TynBul* 56, no. 2 (2005): 63–90.

things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened”).<sup>56</sup>

There are other explicit eschatological texts in Isaiah. Among these is Isa. 41:22–23, which speaks of the idols as unable to announce the “end” (MT: *’ahārītān*; LXX: *ta eschata*),<sup>57</sup> in contrast to Israel’s God, who is the only one “declaring the end [MT: *’ahārīt*; LXX: *ta eschata*, ‘latter events’] from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10). The “end” in these contexts refers to the promised restoration of Israel to the land in a new creation,<sup>58</sup> especially in light of the directly preceding context set by Isa. 41:18–20:

I will open rivers on the bare heights  
And springs in the midst of the valleys;  
I will make the wilderness a pool of water  
And the dry land fountains of water.  
I will put the cedar in the wilderness,  
The acacia and the myrtle and the olive tree;  
I will place the juniper in the desert  
Together with the box tree and the cypress,  
That they may see and recognize,  
And consider and gain insight as well,  
That the hand of the LORD has done this,  
And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

### *Micah*

Micah 4:1–4 is identical to Isa. 2:1b–4 (see above), but it adds new creation imagery (4:4: “Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid”) and underscores that God will be the ruler in Zion. The paradisaical garden imagery of 4:4 is not unexpected in a passage that has just pictured a latter-day temple-mountain, especially since Eden was a garden on a mountain (see Ezek. 28:14, 16, 18, to be compared with Mic. 4:4). Thus, primal history is repeated in eschatological history (*Barn.* 6:13 says, “Behold, I make the last things as the first”). Neither is Isaiah unfamiliar with an eschatological arboreal temple atmosphere: “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the box tree, and the cypress together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary, and I shall make the place of My feet [the ark of the covenant] glorious” (Isa. 60:13).

56. On which, see also Beale, *Revelation*, 797, where Isa. 2:2 is seen to be woven into the broader allusion to Ps. 86:9–10.

57. Likewise Isa. 41:23 has “afterward” (*lē’āhōr*), which the LXX renders as “at the end” (*ep’ eschatou*).

58. For an elaboration of this context of restoration and new creation as the content of these eschatological statements in Isa. 40–66, see chap. 16 under the heading “Paul’s View of Reconciliation as New Creation and Restoration from Exile.”

### *Jeremiah*

The phrase “in the latter days” appears four times in Jeremiah. Jeremiah 23:20 says, “The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of his heart; in the latter days [*bē’ahārīt hayyāmīm*] you will clearly understand it.” The phrase “in the latter days” is identical in Hebrew to all the passages surveyed above, but it appears to be a reference to Deut. 31:27–29, where Israel’s “stubbornness” is mentioned together with the “anger” of the “LORD” (so also Jer. 23:17–20). Thus, in the light of the earlier parallel in Deut. 4:30, this may refer to the latter-day tribulation to come upon the people of Israel because of their sin, at the end of which God will cause them to return to him and bring them out of distress. However much the Deuteronomy text may be in mind, the emphasis here is the same as Deut. 4:30, where restoration in the latter days from distress is the focus. Especially, Jer. 23:20 underscores that “in the latter days,” when restoration has occurred, the false prophecy of the false prophets will not blind God’s people, and they will have a fuller redemptive-historical “understanding” of why he expressed his anger against Israel.

An eschatological view of Jer. 23:20 is further indicated by Jer. 30:24 (37:24 LXX), which reiterates the statement of the former and places it more clearly into a context of eschatological restoration, as the preceding context of both 30:17–22 and 31:1–40 make clear.<sup>59</sup> The “latter days” of 30:24 are equivalent to “at that time” (31:1), “the days are coming” (31:27, 31, 38), “in those days” (31:29), and “after those days” (31:33), all of which designate the end-time of restoration. This is a time when Israel will begin to fulfill the mandate and later reiterated promise of Gen. 1:28 (“And I will cause them to be multiplied, and they will not be diminished; and I will cause them to be glorified, and they will not be insignificant” [Jer. 30:19]). The following context shows that this will happen in a renewed creation (31:12–14). Above all, however, the following context expands on the eschatological “understanding” of 30:24 by explaining that at the end-time restoration God will make a “new covenant” with Israel in which he will forgive its sin and in which it will have a greater understanding of God’s law and of God himself than previous generations had (31:31–34).<sup>60</sup> Presumably, this latter-day “understanding” will enable Israel to perceive that its suffering was part of God’s just judgment on

59. See, e.g., F. B. Huey Jr., *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, NAC 16 (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 216; Charles L. Feinberg, “Jeremiah,” in vol. 6 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 523. Neither commentator thinks that Jer. 23:20 is eschatological, though Feinberg (pp. 663, 671) sees the very same phrase in Jer. 48:47; 49:39 to refer to the eschatological messianic times. Commentators also generally view Jer. 30:24 to be noneschatological.

60. That Jer. 31:31–34 develops 30:24 is clear not only from the synonymous expressions for “latter days” there (see above) and the focus on end-time understanding, but also from the repetition of the phrase “I will be their God, and they shall be My people” in 31:33 (on which,

it, that God had ordained that a faithful remnant be produced and refined by the fire of judgment, and that his deliverance of the faithful from such suffering was an expression of his grace and that he would “forgive their iniquity” (on which, see also Jer. 32:37–43).

“In the latter days” occurs twice more in Jeremiah: 48:47; 49:39 (25:19 LXX). Strikingly, it refers to gentile nations (respectively Moab and Elam) being restored to God in the end time. Like Israel, these nations will suffer punishment under God’s judicial hand and even go into exile (see 48:46), but “in the latter days” God “will restore the captivity” of these peoples (so likewise with respect to Ammon, on which, see 49:6). The restoration of the faithful among these nations appears to coincide with the restoration of the remnant of Israel, as is the case also in Isa. 40–66. This use of “in the latter days” together with nations (though *‘ammîm* is not present as in Isaiah and Micah) being positively related to God probably develops Gen. 49:1, 10 and Isa. 2:2–4, where the same eschatological idea is expressed.

### *Ezekiel*

Ezekiel 38:14–16 refers to God bringing an enemy (called “Gog”) against Israel to oppress it “in the latter days,” so that again we have reference to Israel’s end-time tribulation, which we have seen in Deut. 31:29, as well as possibly in Deut. 4:30. After this oppression, God promises to pour out his Spirit on the people of Israel (Ezek. 39:28–29) and establish his eschatological temple among them (Ezek. 40–47).

### *Daniel*

#### THE LATTER-DAY STONE-MOUNTAIN OF DANIEL 2

The book of Daniel contains several references to “the latter days.” The first appears in Dan. 2:28–29, 45:

However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days [*bē’ahārît yômayyā*]. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place after this [*’ahārê*]; and he who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. . . .

Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place after this [*’ahārê*]; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.

see 30:22; 31:1; for discussion of this eschatological fellowship formula, see Beale, *Revelation*, 1046–48).

The OG of Daniel renders “after this” in verses 29, 45 as “in the latter days,” most likely because they are in parallelism with “in the latter days” of verse 28. The vision was of a huge statue composed of four sections, each of which represented a world empire. The climax of the vision portrays a stone coming from nowhere that smashes the statue and grows and fills the entire world. Daniel explains that the stone’s smashing of the statue represents the kingdom of God’s defeat of evil empires at the end of time and the eternal establishment of God’s kingdom on earth (vv. 44–45). Daniel 2:28 and the verses that follow have so many unique correspondences to Isa. 2:2 (// Mic. 4:1) that it probably has been influenced by the Isaiah passage.

There are indications that Daniel’s eschatological stone-mountain may indeed be closely associated with the gigantic end-time temple in Isa. 2, further confirming its eschatological nature. First, not only does Isa. 2:2–3 utilize a mountain to symbolize Israel, but also the image is integrally connected to the temple, “the mountain of the house of the LORD.” Such a close link between mountain and temple is made throughout the OT, so that Mount Zion is sometimes merely referred to as “mountain,” “hill,” or a similar image. These ways of speaking about Mount Zion either closely associate it or virtually equate it with the temple as a synecdoche of the whole for the part (the entire mountain is substituted for the top part, where the temple is located).<sup>61</sup> For example, repeatedly occurring are phrases such as “mountain of the house” (Jer. 26:18; Mic. 4:1), “holy mountain” (about 20x in the OT), “holy hill” (Pss. 15:1; 43:3; 99:9; Jer. 31:23), and “temple hill” (1 Macc. 13:52; 16:20). Sometimes these references are equated with the temple, for example, in the following contexts: in Isa. 66:20 “holy mountain” = “house of the LORD”; in Ps. 15:1 “holy hill” = “your tent”; in Ps. 24:3 “hill of the LORD” = “his holy place” (cf. Ps. 43:3).

Thus, “mountain,” when referring to Zion, often includes reference to the temple.<sup>62</sup> Among the best illustrations of this are Isa. 2:2–3 and Mic. 4:1–2, which equate “the mountain of the house of the LORD” with “the mountain of the LORD . . . the house of the God of Jacob.” The description of the mountain in Dan. 2 rings with the same intonations of these descriptions in Isaiah and Micah.

Second, what is further attractive about linking Dan. 2 and Isa. 2:2–3 (// Mic. 4:1–2) as “eschatological temple” texts is that both are introduced as containing events that are to occur “in the latter days” (Dan. 2:28 [so also Dan. 2:29 LXX]; Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:1). Micah even equates “the mountain of the house of the LORD” (Mic. 4:1) with God’s eternal kingdom, the latter an explicit element of the mountain in Dan. 2: “The LORD will reign over them in Mount

61. A synecdoche is a figure of speech wherein the whole represents the part or the part represents the whole.

62. In 4 *Ezra* 13:6–7, 35–36 the Dan. 2 mountain is equated with “Mount Zion” and “Zion.”



Zion . . . forever” (Mic. 4:7). Exodus 15:17–18 also equates “the mountain of Your inheritance” with “the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your dwelling, the sanctuary,” from where “the LORD shall reign forever and ever.” Additionally, it is clear that the eschatological temple was to be situated on a mountain (Ezek. 40:2; Rev. 21:10).

Third, both Isa. 2:2–3 and Mic. 4:1–2 portray the mountain on which the temple sits as growing: it “will be raised above the hills.” Although this is not as explicit as Daniel’s rock that becomes a mountain and fills the earth, it is not far from that picture. Both portray a growing mountain temple. Both the Daniel and Isaiah/Micah passages, being eschatologically oriented, reverberate with echoes of new creation. The image of an emerging new creation may be perceived in the depiction of a growing holy mountain because the emergence of mountains certainly was a feature of the original creation.

Fourth, both Isa. 2 and Dan. 2 have in common the background of the ancient Near Eastern picture of temples growing like a mountain from a stone, which was linked with the dominion of the kingdom in which the temple started its growth. This is well illustrated by the Sumerian Cylinders of Gudea, which commemorate King Gudea’s building and dedication of a temple for the god Ningirsu in Lagash.<sup>63</sup> The narrative about King Gudea even says that “all the foreign lands assemble from the horizon” to this gigantic temple (Cylinder A ix.15), and that from the temple the king will issue “laws” during “a day of majestic justice” (Cylinder B xvii.15).<sup>64</sup>

These four observations point to the probability that Dan. 2:28 and its context about the growing stone are developing the eschatological picture in Isa. 2:2 (// Mic. 4:1).<sup>65</sup>

C. F. Keil affirms that the events “which must occur afterwards” in Dan. 2:29 include the immediate future of the then-reigning king, Nebuchadnezzar, as well, and, therefore, of the writer himself.<sup>66</sup> But even in contrast to Keil, strictly speaking, the “latter days” of Dan. 2:28 (= “after this” [Dan. 2:29, 45]), to which the entire dream and interpretation are said to refer, include not only the immediate and distant future but also the immediate past and present. This is evident from observing that the head of gold in Dan. 2:37–38 is identified as Nebuchadnezzar in his present reign (“You *are* the head of gold”). Yet, the

63. For elaboration, see Beale, *Temple*, 148–52.

64. See Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 89–90. Wildberger notes these two additional parallels with Isa. 2. For the full text of the Sumerian Cylinders of Gudea, see Richard E. Averbeck, “The Cylinders of Gudea (2.155),” in *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*, vol. 2 of *The Context of Scripture: Archival Documents from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 418–33.

65. The discussion of Dan. 2 up to this point has been an abbreviated revision of Beale, *Temple*, 145–52.

66. C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, trans. M. G. Easton, K&D (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 111–12.

description of his reign in verses 37–38 is holistic, so that not only the immediate future is included in the identification but also the recent past.

As in Gen. 49:1, so also here commentators take this to mean that an idea of “eschatology” is not in mind, but only the indefinite future. Alternatively, this could further support my conclusion above that “latter days” in Gen. 49:1 (in relation to 49:2–27) refers to events that are designed to move toward, and therefore are inextricably linked to, a final, historical end-time climax, and this may be one reason that even they can be vaguely included, together with the Judah prophecy, under the rubric of what will happen “in the latter days.” In particular, in Gen. 49 the failure of Israel’s other tribes to achieve end-time success points to Judah’s final triumph, and the tribes find their ultimate successful destiny in that of Judah.

Likewise, the focus of Daniel’s “latter days” is on the establishment of God’s kingdom in the future, which, I will argue, various NT writers view to have been inaugurated in their own time. Interestingly, Daniel’s portrayal of God’s defeat of the end-time evil kingdom pictures the defeat not merely of the final kingdom but also of the three preceding kingdoms leading up to the last kingdom as being destroyed “like one” kingdom with it (Dan. 2:35; cf. 2:45). This may be another way to indicate that although the focus of “the latter days” is on the final defeat of the enemy kingdom at the end of history, preceding events are part of a sovereignly designed historical movement and are part of an eschatological process inextricably linked to the “end” of that process and culminate in final judgment.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps another way to state this is that the first three kingdoms are part of eschatological patterns, especially in their judgmental demise, so that they are prototypical harbingers that foreshadow the final demise at the very end of history pictured in Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45. That the first three kingdoms are part of an eschatological portrayal is apparent from recalling that they all undergo end-time judgment *together* with the fourth and last kingdom (Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45). The theological reason for the identification of the first three kingdoms’ judgment with the fourth kingdom’s judgment is that they were corporately represented by that last kingdom. Thus, their very historical sinful existence lays the basis for their future inevitable judgment. Just as in a similar manner Judaism and the NT saw sinful humanity as corporately represented by Adam’s sin at the beginning of history, so Dan. 2 sees the sinful kingdoms leading up to the last kingdom to be corporately represented by that kingdom’s final end-time judgment. Consequently, Dan. 2’s expression “in the latter days” refers to “the outcome of the future and not the future in general.”<sup>68</sup>

67. For similar assessment, see Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 44. The same kind of phenomenon is observable in Dan. 11:1–12:13 as an elaboration of the content of “the latter days” in Dan. 10:14.

68. H. Seebass, “אֲחֵרֵי יָמֵי,” *TDOT* 1:211.

In support of this extended notion of the first three kingdoms being part of a prototypical eschatology is the portrayal of one of the kings of the first kingdom (Babylon) as an Adam-like figure. An allusion to Gen. 1:28 is apparent in Dan. 2:38 LXX, where Daniel says that God has given the Babylonian king rule over “the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea,” almost verbatim with the LXX of Gen. 1:28<sup>69</sup> (the same observation may be made of the warped universal kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt portrayed by Ezek. 31 with language from Gen. 1–2).<sup>70</sup> This may indicate that other human kingdoms besides those of Israel were also involved in the process of what appear to be eschatological “start-ups” wherein a king is commissioned by God to do what Adam should have done, but, like Adam, he also fails, and the eschatological motor stalls and ultimately breaks down. Further evidence of an allusion to Gen. 1:28 in Daniel is that the former sees that God’s kingdom will permeate the entire earth: the “stone” that became a “great mountain . . . filled the whole earth.” The notion of God’s kingdom “filling the whole earth” echoes Gen. 1:26, 28, where God commissions Adam to “fill the earth” and to “rule . . . over all the earth.” What Adam, as well as Babylonian and Assyrian kings, tried to fulfill<sup>71</sup> will be fulfilled only by God’s agent in the end time (Dan. 7:13–14 identifies this divine agent to be the “Son of Man”).

#### OTHER REFERENCES TO LATTER DAYS IN DANIEL

The next reference to the actual phrase “in the latter days” is in Dan. 10:14, where a heavenly being comes to Daniel to give him “an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days [*bē’ahārīt hayyāmim*].” The content of this eschatological revelation is given in chapters 11–12, which focuses on the historical climax of a final tribulation for Israel and a subsequent resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous (11:28–12:13). The final tribulation has already been alluded to in 7:21, 23, 25; 8:17–26, the latter of which calls this period of distress and deception by the end-time opponent one that pertains “to the time of the end” (*lē’et-qēš* [8:17]) and “to the appointed time of the end” (*lēmô’ēd qēš* [8:19]). Likewise, chapters 11–12 use various kinds of “latter-day” expressions<sup>72</sup> to indicate facets of Israel’s final distress of deception and persecution instigated by the eschatological opponent. At

69. Following André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. David Pellauer (London: SPCK, 1979), 50. Lacocque notes also the same parallel with Ps. 8:8. Similarly in line with the LXX of Gen. 1:28 is mention that the second kingdom “will have dominion over all the earth” (Dan. 2:39).

70. On which, see Beale, *Temple*, 126–29.

71. Of course, the pagan kings were not consciously trying to fulfill an Adamic mandate, but they were trying to dominate the earth, so that one might say that in the common grace realm their drive to rule is a reflection of that original mandate. However, in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, this Adamic mandate was revealed by God to the king through Daniel (Dan. 2:37–38).

72. Each of which have “end” (*qēš*) as part of the expression, like those in Dan. 8. For the interpretative renderings in TH and the OG of the “latter-day” Hebrew clauses in Dan. 8; 10; 11–12, see chap. 5 under the heading “Eschatological References in the General Epistles.”

the “end,” the antitheocratic antagonist will intend to “do evil” (11:27), will persecute the saints and try to deceive them (11:32–35, 40–41), but they will not compromise because of their wisdom (here also see 12:3–4, 9–10). Interestingly, the activities of this final enemy are enigmatically associated with “ships of Kittim” (11:30), which come against him. Likewise, Num. 24:24 portrays “ships of Kittim” that are to come against Israel’s enemy “in the latter days” (Num. 24:14), which is the only other place in biblical literature that the phrase “ships of Kittim” occurs. This indicates that Dan. 11 is developing in some way the latter-day portrayal of Num. 24 as it relates to Israel’s opponents. After the time of tribulation and deception (Dan. 12:1, 10), the saints will be raised from the dead (12:2, 13). Daniel again says that these events will happen at “the end time” (*’ēt qēṣ* [12:4]) and “at the end of the days” (*l’ēqēṣ hayyāmîn* [12:13]).

### *Conclusion*

G. B. Caird has written a helpful chapter on “The Language of Eschatology,”<sup>73</sup> where he summarizes the major definitions given to the term “eschatology”:

1. the last things of death, judgment, heaven, and hell;
2. the final destiny of Israel as a nation (with only secondary thought of the individual) and the universal victory of Israel’s God;
3. the end of the cosmos, which is expected to be imminent;
4. “inaugurated” or “already and not yet” coming of the end of the world;
5. the end reaching out from the past and impelling one to an existential decision and, hence, encounter with God;
6. some significant OT definitions see the essence of eschatology to be not “finality” but “newness” or
7. “purpose,” the latter understood in terms of God working out a purpose in history to reach a goal.

These definitions are not mutually exclusive unless they are taken too narrowly, as too often has been the case. This can easily be seen with the first two. The third and the fourth are compatible as long as the imminent end of the former is viewed to be something that can happen at any time and no date-setting is proposed. Accordingly, the second two are not inconsistent with the first two. The sixth and the seventh would be mutually exclusive of the prior five if the notion of “nonfinality” is retained, but when that notion is jettisoned, both can easily fit into a traditionally understood eschatological concept, especially as this is viewed as a historical process worked out over time that eventuates in a definitive historical climax beyond which there will

<sup>73</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 243–71.

be no reversal. Truly incompatible is the fifth definition (Rudolf Bultmann's), which understands Jesus's teaching of the end reaching out from the past into the present and resulting in an existential decision. However, this does not refer to true eschatological realities that are a part of true history, since through "demythologization" eschatology is purely metaphorical. Since Bultmann held that Jesus was wrong about when the "end" would come, Jesus's teachings about eschatology must be demythologized and made completely metaphorical. But if this definition is restated as "the literal end reaching back from the literal future into the present to result in an existential decision," then this is quite consistent with inaugurated eschatology that takes place in space-time history.

Thus, most of the definitions are compatible, and the others form important complements also when they are altered as above. Accordingly, these definitions are not inconsistent with the various aspects of OT eschatology observed in the main body of this chapter (nor are they inconsistent, I might add, with NT eschatology to be observed below).

After elaborating on these definitions, Caird gives his own threefold definition of eschatology:

1. The biblical writers believed literally that the world had had a beginning in the past and would have an end in the future.
2. They regularly use "end of the world" language metaphorically to refer to that which they well knew was not the end of the world.
3. As with all other uses of metaphor, we have to allow for the likelihood of some literalist misinterpretation on the part of the hearer, and for the possibility of some blurring of the edges between vehicle and tenor on the part of the speaker.<sup>74</sup>

Caird's third category acknowledges that sometimes metaphorical uses of eschatological language can blur the literal reference with the picture to include some degree of literal reference to the eschaton. Furthermore, although at times Caird says that references in the second category are pure metaphor (in the same way that the psalmist in Ps. 23 depicted himself as a sheep), at other times he refers to such uses "as an anticipation and embodiment of the universal judgment to come."<sup>75</sup> He gives an illustration that fits well with this: the prophets had "bifocal vision" whereby with the near-sight lens they saw imminent historical events, and with the long-sight lens they saw the final historical end.<sup>76</sup> This is quite close to the definition of typology given by many in which an OT historical person, institution, or event has analogous corre-

74. *Ibid.*, 256.

75. *Ibid.*, 260.

76. *Ibid.*, 258.

spondence to and is a foreshadowing of a later event in the NT age. Although it certainly is possible, even likely, that there are purely metaphorical uses of eschatological language, the OT uses of eschatological phraseology that we have surveyed (e.g., “latter days”) most likely fall into any of Caird’s three categories, the latter two understood as “anticipations and embodiments” of the very end. Indeed, Caird quotes the definition of the phrase “in the latter days” (*be’ahārīt hayyāmīm*) by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, which, we have seen, fits well within the contours of the approach in this chapter: “a prophetic phrase denoting the final period of the history so far as the speaker’s perspective reaches.” Caird summarizes this as “the equivalent of the English expression ‘in the end’ or ‘ultimately’ when we use them to mean ‘sooner or later’ or ‘in the future’; and it has precisely that vagueness which makes for the blurring of the edges mentioned in Proposition 3.”<sup>77</sup> This comports excellently with a view of progressive revelation throughout the development of the writing of the biblical books of the canon, as we also observed earlier.

We have seen that the phrase “latter days” occurs at points throughout the OT to refer not to the mere indefinite future<sup>78</sup> but rather to the culmination of history from the various writers’ perspectives. Although earlier OT authors have more vague or “thicker” prophetic portraits of “the latter days,” some of which we have observed in this chapter, all include in a variety of ways reference to a future period that represents *an irreversible radical break with a former period*. I define these uses of “latter days” to be overtly eschatological because all refer to a permanent and radical break with the preceding historical epoch. A filling out of the notion of “the latter days” occurs as the OT writings develop and revelation progresses. It is like a seed germinating, sprouting, and then growing into a small plant and then developing into a full plant. A developing organic eschatological perspective is pointed to by my earlier observation in this chapter that the phrase “in the latter days” is used across the OT almost always in intertextual development of earlier uses of the same phrase.<sup>79</sup>

77. Ibid., 257–58.

78. See John T. Willis, “The Expression *be’acharith hayyamim* in the Old Testament,” *ResQ* 22 (1979): 54–71. Willis affirms, unpersuasively in my view, that every use of “latter days” in the OT, DSS, and NT refers to mere indefinite future. This position is held by no one else whose work I have surveyed.

79. Some may want to argue that merely because a later OT writer understands earlier passages to be eschatological does not mean that these earlier passages are eschatological. Some may say this because the later author may merely use earlier wording analogically or in some way that does not pay attention to the earlier contextual meaning. The presupposition of this book is that later biblical authors refer to earlier texts in ways that reflect varying degrees of significant commensurate contextual awareness of the earlier texts, so that there is some kind of noteworthy organic conceptual connection between the two texts. One of the validations of this approach is that there is always enriched interpretative light shed on the earlier text and the later alluding text.

The following eschatological conditions represent various aspects of the eschatological discontinuity:

1. a final, unsurpassed and incomparable period of tribulation for God's people by an end-time opponent who deceives and persecutes, in the face of which they will need wisdom not to compromise; afterward they are
2. delivered,
3. resurrected, and their kingdom reestablished;
4. at this future time, God will rule on earth
5. through a coming Davidic king who will defeat all opposition and reign in peace in a new creation over both
6. the nations and
7. restored Israel,
8. with whom God will make a new covenant, and
9. upon whom God will bestow the Spirit, and
10. among whom the temple will be rebuilt.

These ten ideas compose in various OT contexts the content of the expression “the latter days” (and its near equivalents in Daniel). The notions of kingdom, king, and rule over nations are sometimes developed in connection with the fulfillment of the Adamic-patriarchal promises of blessing. In this connection, the protological beginning chapters of Gen. 1–3 reveal the expectation that Adam should have reigned as a consummate priest-king in God's perfect image. His failure to accomplish this left open the necessity for another Adam figure to accomplish the first Adam's commission. The subsequent chapters of Genesis and, indeed, of the OT show repeated allusion to Gen. 1:28 and hope for such a figure, but no significant fulfillment occurs. It had to await another who would come after the formal close of the OT period of expectation.

Although it is true that there are numerous other OT passages about eschatology where the technical language of “latter days” and its synonyms do not appear, the texts surveyed above cover all the major topics of eschatology found elsewhere in the OT (though there are subcategories of these major topics). We have seen that some scholars view the expression “in the latter days” to refer to the indefinite future, while others, though acknowledging this meaning in some cases, also see an overt eschatological nuance in other uses.<sup>80</sup> The focus of the expression “in the latter days” refers to a period at the end of history, but it also includes secondarily what we may call “protoeschatological”

80. E.g., BDB 31; H. Seebass, “אַחֲרַיִת,” *TDOT* 1:207–12; Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, AB 21B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 197. Lundbom understands this to be the consensus among commentators.

or apparent “semieschatological” events (e.g., tribulation, return from exile) that occur at points in the OT epoch before the climactic world-ending happenings and are inextricably linked to and lead up to such final happenings.

The main storyline of the OT was formulated at the end of the preceding chapter. This chapter has revealed that eschatology is an essential part of this storyline, which we have seen was already implied in the Gen. 1–3 narrative itself. Thus, the formulation of the OT storyline at the end of chapter 2 may be slightly revised in the following manner: *The Old Testament is the story of God, who progressively reestablishes his eschatological new-creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people by his word and Spirit through promise, covenant, and redemption, resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to advance this kingdom and judgment (defeat or exile) for the unfaithful, unto his glory.*