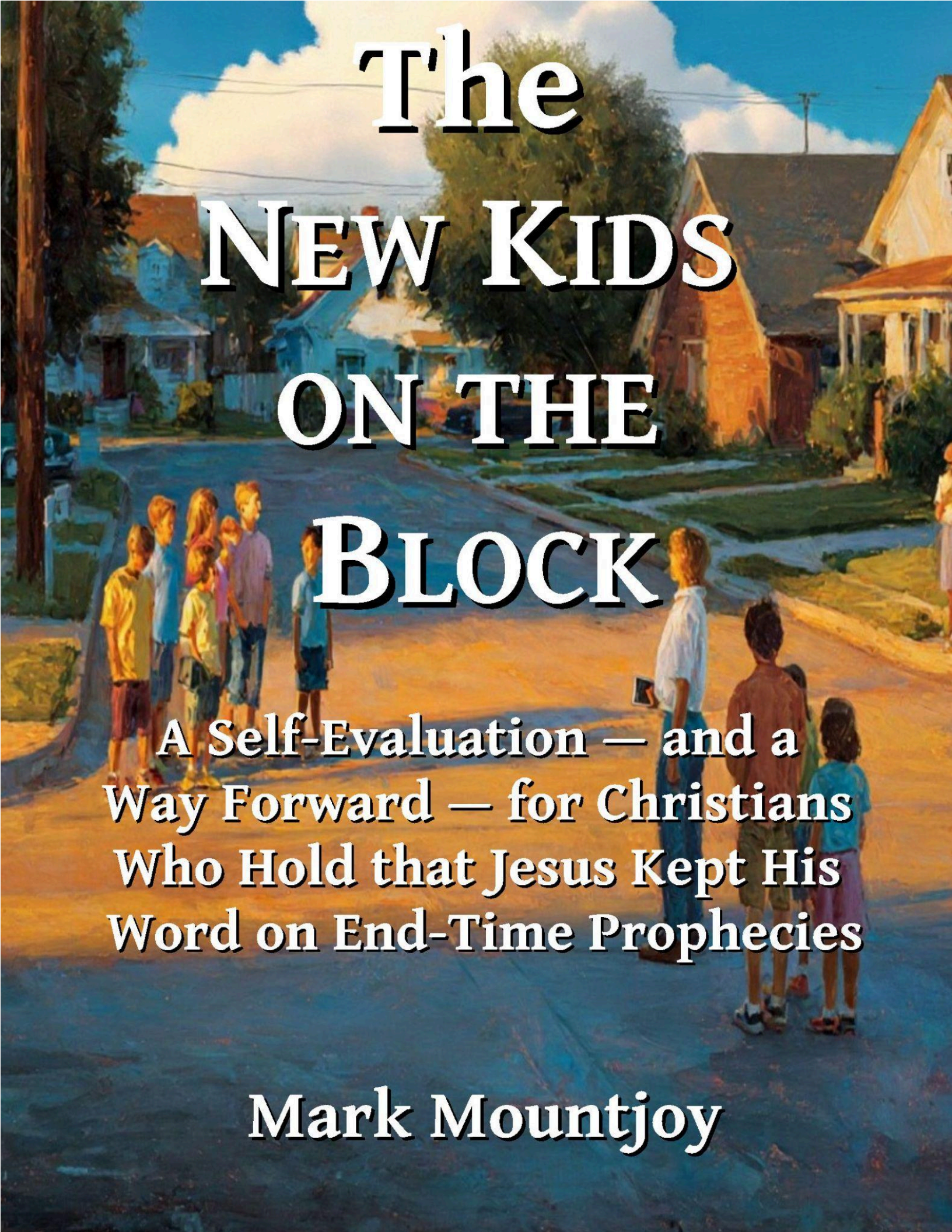


The background of the entire page is a painting of a suburban street scene. In the foreground, a group of about ten children are standing on a paved road, looking towards the background. They are dressed in casual summer clothing like t-shirts and shorts. The street is lined with houses, some with porches, and trees. The sky is blue with some white clouds. The overall style is that of a classic oil painting.

The NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

A Self-Evaluation — and a
Way Forward — for Christians
Who Hold that Jesus Kept His
Word on End-Time Prophecies

Mark Mountjoy

New Kids on the Block

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Motus Conservationis Christianae

www.truechristianpress.org

Denver - San Francisco - Lagos
United States of America - Nigeria

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There is a particular silence that greets anyone who says, “I believe the Second Coming already happened.” Not argument. Not refutation. Just a slow recalculation in someone else’s eyes, and a door closing quietly enough that you’d miss it if you hadn’t felt it close before.

The New Kids on the Block is a self-evaluation, written from inside that silence, for the two neighboring households who know it best: Atavists and Full Preterists, who hold that Jesus kept His promises to His own generation, on time, without exception. This book traces where that silence comes from, what part of the suspicion is actually earned, and what remains true regardless: the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the whole shared confession that unites this conversation’s rival camps with every Futurist believer they’ve ever unsettled. Built on decades of research into Second Temple chronology, Josephus, and the Hasmonean kingdom, this book doesn’t ask anyone to concede an argument. It asks for patience, moderation, and a chair pulled up to a table big enough for the disagreement to outlast the vindication.

Designed by True Christian Press

Preface

I have been holding this position since November of 1981, which means I have had over four decades to watch how people react when they hear it for the first time. Long enough to stop being surprised by the silence. Long enough, I hope, to have finally learned something useful about what to do with it.

This book is not the argument itself, not in the technical sense. The exegesis, the chronology, the Josephus, the Tacitus, the Hebrew calendar dates worked out to the day, all of that lives elsewhere, in other books this press has published and will keep publishing. This one is something narrower and, I've come to think, something more necessary: an honest look at what it costs to hold this position, what it doesn't have to cost, and how to carry it in a way that doesn't make the truth of it harder for the next person to hear.

I wrote it for two audiences at once, which is a strange thing to admit in a preface. I wrote it for the Atavists and Full Preterists who already know this silence firsthand, who have stood in a room and watched the temperature drop, and who need to hear plainly that

the frost is not a verdict on their character. And I wrote it, just as much, for the Futurist reader who has picked this book up out of curiosity, or suspicion, or both, and deserves to find in these pages exactly what I'd want them to find: not a stranger, but a brother making his case as carefully and as charitably as he knows how.

If you finish this book still unconvinced of the timeline, I will count it a success anyway, provided you close it convinced that the men and women who hold it still love the Lord Jesus, still love His Church, and are still glad to sit at the same table as you while we sort the rest of it out.

Introduction

Opening — The Silence

This book is about something many of us have lived through but rarely say out loud: what happens, socially and spiritually, to a Christian who comes to believe that Jesus already kept the promises of His return — and why understanding that experience matters, not just for our own peace of mind, but for the witness of the whole Body of Christ.

This matters because the reaction we meet when we say this out loud is almost never a reasoned disagreement. It is something faster and harder to name — a silence, a distancing, sometimes an outright verdict on our character before a single argument has been heard. If we don't understand what that reaction actually is, we will either absorb it as proof we've done something wrong, or we will harden against the very people we're called to love. Neither serves Christ. So that's where I want to start — not with the exegesis, though we'll get there, but with the moment itself.

“I believe the Second Coming already happened.”

That silence. You know it. I know it. It is not the silence of someone processing an argument. It is the silence of someone recalculating who you are. You can watch it happen in real time — the polite nod arrives about a half-second late, the eyes do a small inventory of the room, and a door somewhere closes so quietly you'd miss it if you hadn't felt it close on you before.

Atavists know this silence. So do Full Preterists, though for slightly different reasons, and this book is written for both — rival household, same neighborhood. If you hold that the promises tied to the Second Jewish Commonwealth's terminal years were fulfilled on schedule, to the audience they were made to, you have almost certainly met this silence, and you have probably wondered whether it means something is wrong with you.

It doesn't. But it's worth understanding exactly what it does mean, because the diagnosis changes what you do next — and, frankly, whether you keep trying at all.

The Crime of Being Unfamiliar — Why the Door Closes

Nobody actually thinks of Atavism as heresy on first contact. Heresy requires a category to be heretical inside of. What most Christians experience instead is something closer to encountering a species they

didn't know existed — the theological equivalent of being told there's a fifth ocean.

Their filing system has no drawer for you, so you don't get filed as wrong. You get filed as implausible. And implausible people, in polite company, get the *Enfant Terrible* treatment: not refuted, just quietly excused from the conversation before dessert.

Here's the mercy buried in that observation: you are not being punished for being wrong. You are being quarantined for being unfamiliar. Those produce identical symptoms in the short term — the same frosty politeness, the same conversation that never quite continues — but they are not the same disease, and only one of them is actually about you.

The Curtain That Ate 103 Years — The Missing Drawer

Here is the deeper mechanism, and it deserves more credit than “unfamiliar” implies, because it isn't mere ignorance. For most Christians, the veil tearing at the crucifixion doesn't just mark an event — it closes a book.

Old covenant, concluded. New covenant, inaugurated. Whatever happens to Jerusalem, the Temple, the nation after — that's scenery. Background noise. The case was settled at the cross.

So when you show up saying the New Testament keeps looking past the cross toward something still ahead — Temple, nation, terminal years — you sound like you're re-litigating a verdict. You're not. You're pointing out the case was never closed. The curtain tore, yes. But the trial continued for over a century.

“In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” — Hebrews 8:13

Present tense. Ongoing. Not vanished. The drawer is missing. That's why you get filed as implausible — there's nowhere to put you.

And here's the joke worth sitting with for a moment, because it's true as well as funny: we keep handing people a fifth act, and they left the theater a long time ago believing it was a three-act play. The trouble was never that Act Four is hard to follow. The trouble is nobody told them there was an intermission.

Borrowed Labels — A Coat Bought for Someone Else

When the unfamiliarity does get named — when someone reaches for a category instead of just filing you under odd — the label almost always arrives pre-owned.

“...Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” — 2 Timothy 2:17–18

This gets invoked as though “the resurrection is past” were a timeless heresy-shape, rather than Paul’s judgment on a specific claim made a decade or more before the Commonwealth’s own terminus had even arrived. Whatever those two men were teaching, it logically could not have been our claim — the events we say fulfilled the promise hadn’t happened yet in their lifetime either. The label doesn’t fit the referent. It’s a coat bought for someone else’s shoulders.

Acts 1:11 gets used the same way — sealed off from its own family of texts, treated as addressed to no one in particular and therefore to everyone indefinitely. But look at its neighbors in the very same book, all of them read with careful attention to audience:

“...this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel... in the last days... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” — Acts 2:16, 17, 21, addressed to “ye men of Judaea”

“...that he may send Jesus Christ... whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things... Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel...” — Acts 3:20–24, addressed to the crowd standing in front of Peter

Even John 21:20–23 shows the earliest church already arguing about near-term return language — and needing correction on the specifics, not the category. Acts 1:11 is the one verse in this cluster exempted from the rule that governs all its neighbors. That’s not principled exegesis. That’s a verse doing overtime because nobody thought to ask it to clock out.

Knowing this doesn’t hand you a weapon. It hands you something better: the knowledge that the label was wrong before you ever opened your mouth — which means the frost that follows is not a verdict you earned.

The Verse Doing Overtime — Why the Frost Feels Moral

There is one more label worth examining, and it is the oldest and heaviest one, because it isn't borrowed from someone else's controversy — it's drawn from the very texts that are supposed to describe the Christian mindset itself.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” — Titus 2:13

“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”
— 1 John 3:2–3

These do double duty in conventional Futurist reading: they assert an event still pending, and they convert holding that expectation into a test of sanctification. Which means when an Atavist discloses his position, the listener isn't simply hearing a disagreement about dates. He is hearing, however unfairly, a man declining the very discipline that is supposed to keep a Christian clean. That is why the reaction so often feels like moral frost, not just intellectual disagreement.

But perpetual postponement has its own sanctification problem, and Scripture names it directly:

“But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants... The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him.” — Matthew 24:48–51

Scripture itself treats indefinite deferral as corrosive to holiness, not protective of it. Which raises an uncomfortable question for anyone using Titus 2:13 to indict us: if a hope’s purifying power depends on genuine nearness, what does it do to a soul, over centuries, to keep insisting on nearness that never actually arrives?

We are not the ones who emptied “blessed hope” of its force. We are the ones asking to give the words their original, dated, purifying weight back. Jesus kept every promise He made to His own generation — on time, without exception.

What the Fear Gets Right — The Mirror We Can’t Dodge

None of this settles the matter. A person who overcomes the initial shock and starts to find the Atavist case exegetically compelling will, if he has any sense at all, do exactly one more thing before he goes any further: he will look around at what our actual lives and churches look like.

That is not bigotry against a minority position. It is the same due diligence any sane person runs before joining any new company of people — and it deserves to be run, because the answer it turns up is not always reassuring.

I have met Preterists who no longer believe in singing. I have met whole circles with no interest in gathering, no interest in worship, no interest in anything at all except the argument, endlessly refined, never applied.

Nature abhors a vacuum. When a group organizes its entire identity around what didn't happen when everyone expected it to — rather than around who Christ is and what a life shaped by Him looks like — something always moves in to fill the empty rooms: isolation dressed as purity, doctrinal freelancing dressed as depth, tribal loyalty dressed as fellowship, and in the ugliest cases, plain sin dressed as theological sophistication.

So when a careful person looks past our arguments and asks, quietly, but do you people still act like Christians — that is not, in itself, a category error to be corrected. Sometimes it is entirely accurate pattern recognition. And if we want to be trusted, we have to stop pretending that part isn't true.

We are not entitled to credibility just because we think we're right. Fruit matters. Stability matters. Love matters. And on that score, we have work to do.

Common Ground — What We Already Share

Everything so far has been about the distance — why it opens up, why it feels moral, why some of it we've earned. But distance is only half the picture, and it's worth stopping to take honest stock of the other half: how much ground we already share with the very people who feel far away from us the moment this subject comes up.

Because the truth is, most of what defines a Christian has nothing to do with the timing of the Second Coming, and we should say so plainly, often, and first.

What We Confess Together

We are Trinitarian without qualification — one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and that confession is not a negotiable variable inside our system, it is a fixed point we share with every orthodox believer who has ever recited the Nicene Creed. We confess the full deity of Christ: that He is not merely a great teacher or a favored prophet but God the Son, worthy of worship, equal with the Father.

We confess His virgin birth, His sinless life, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection, and His ascension. We confess salvation by grace through faith in Him alone, not by works. We hold Scripture as authoritative, God-breathed, and sufficient. None of this is in dispute between an Atavist, a Full Preterist, and a Futurist. All of it is the actual center of the Christian faith. The disagreement that produces the silence this creates is a disagreement about one doctrine, among the most complex and least creedally settled in the whole of Christian theology — not a disagreement about who Jesus is or what He did.

What We Practice Together

And it isn't only doctrine. We value the same things a healthy Futurist congregation values, or ought to. We believe the church is meant to gather, not scatter — to sing together, pray together, break bread together, and hold one another accountable in ordinary, unglamorous fellowship (Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:24–25). We believe in outreach and mission — that the gospel is for the nations, that the Great Commission still governs how we spend our lives (Matthew 28:18–20). And we believe, without hedging, in benevolence: caring for the sick, the poor, the imprisoned, and the shut-in as though we were caring for Christ Himself, because that is exactly what Scripture says we are doing (Matthew 25:35–40, James 1:27). A

Christian community that has let any of this go missing has failed regardless of what it believes about eschatology — and a Christian community that has kept all of it intact has already answered the deepest version of the fear described in the last section, whatever it believes about the timing of a single set of promises.

Where We Genuinely Differ — and Why That Can Be Intrigue, Not Alarm

Honesty requires naming real differences too, and not every difference is eschatological. Open Theism — the conviction that God is genuinely relational, that human choices carry real weight, and that the future is, in certain respects, open rather than exhaustively settled — is a live, ongoing conversation across the whole of orthodox Christianity, argued by Trinitarian, cross-affirming, Scripture-honoring theologians on every side of the eschatology debate. It is not a fringe idea we invented to prop up our chronology, and it does not stand or fall with anything we've said about the Commonwealth or its terminal years. Raised at the right moment, in the right tone, it tends to provoke curiosity rather than the frost we've been describing — because it's recognizably a question serious Christians already argue about, not a signal that something has gone wrong.

That distinction matters. A difference that sits inside a conversation the wider church is already having invites engagement. A difference that seems to come from nowhere invites suspicion. Knowing which kind of difference you're holding, and saying so, is itself part of building the trust this whole talk has been circling.

For readers who want the specifics rather than the generalities, a brief statement of our basic beliefs is included as an appendix, along with a chart on the deity of Christ and a fuller treatment of Open Theism — offered not as a test anyone needs to pass, but as an honest, verifiable account of where we actually stand.

What It Cost, and What It Taught

I did not arrive at the Atavist position eagerly, and I want to say plainly that I could not have arrived at it at all, at first. In 1981, on the little I knew, it was unthinkable to me. I had not read Josephus. I had never heard of the Second Jewish Commonwealth, of Simon Bar Giora, of the First Jewish War, of the Kitos War, or of Bar Kokhba and his failed rising. It was already almost more than my mind could hold simply to consider that the destruction of Jerusalem might be a genuine, load-bearing lightning rod within the New Testament's own argument — and my psyche, if I can put it that way, was working overtime not to short-circuit under the

weight of what that implication would mean. I was, in the plainest sense, unnerved by my own position.

And yet I was not going to toss it aside to please the men who were unnerved by it too. Threats of a crack-down, of formal discipline, of being made an example of, did not move me — not because I was brave, but because I knew, with a certainty that outran my ability to fully defend it at the time, that I was holding a genuine good. A pearl of great price does not stop being a pearl because the man holding it is still trembling.

That trembling did not stay theoretical. When my own church moved to force a recantation, they were, in their rush and their panic, unable to parse what I actually held. I had not become a man who believed nothing remained future — unwillingly, almost against my own expectation, I had become what would later be called a Postmillennialist: convinced that the promises tied to the Commonwealth's terminal years had been kept on schedule, and just as convinced that a final, still-future consummation remained ahead. That is a careful, conservative position. It is not the flattened caricature they were reacting to. But panic does not parse nuance. It categorizes fast and moves to containment, and I was disciplined for a cruder position than the one I actually held.

What I remember most, more than the theological charges themselves, is smaller and stranger: they stopped calling me “Brother Mark.” I became, in their mouths, only my last name — Mountjoy, spoken the way one addresses a defendant, not a brother in Christ.

That is not a doctrinal correction. That is the exact moment a person stops being seen as a man who still loved God, still loved the hope of heaven, still wanted to sing and pray and be reasoned with and be called brother, and becomes instead an idea to be expelled, with the man attached to it merely incidental. I had been reduced to a position. And it was, then, the wrong position at that.

Removed from that fellowship, I was free to keep asking the question that had started all of it: did something else happen? Revelation itself seemed to describe two convulsions, not one. The first — Babylon judged, the great city where their Lord was crucified, fallen in the years 67 to 70 CE — I had already seen. The second, in Revelation 20:7–9, comes after the thousand years: Gog and Magog gathered for battle, numbered “as the sand of the sea.”

In the summer of 1983 I found it. Yigael Yadin’s *Bar Kokhba* led me to the rabbinic tradition preserved in *Gittin* — “sixty on sixty” myriads slain at Alexandria of Egypt, and at Bethar itself either four hundred thousand myriads, or, as the text is also read, four thousand

myriads. Yadin himself marks these figures with his own incredulous “[!!]”, and I mark them the same way — not as arithmetic, but as testimony in the oldest register Scripture itself uses for loss beyond counting: the same register as Revelation 20:8’s “sand of the sea,” the same register as Hebrews 11:12, the same register Josephus reaches for when he says the diaspora itself was not to be calculated by numbers (*Antiquities* 11.5.2). Whatever precision was lost in the transmission, nothing about the scale of human devastation these numbers were reaching for is diminished by it.

I had seen the first convulsion on November 7, 1981. I had understood it by June 1982. I had spoken it that summer, and been removed for it that winter. Now, a year and a half after the vision that started everything, I had found the second: Bar Kokhba, 132 to 136 CE. From that terminus forward, Revelation describes no third convulsion. The increase of His government had begun.

The second displacement came later and was, in its own way, just as disorienting. Having been pushed out of a Futurist fellowship that could not see past the label, I found among some Preterist circles that the ordinary furniture of church life — the singing, the fellowship, the shared meals, the plain warmth of being known — had simply gone missing, crowded out entirely by the argument. I

had not traded a cold house for a warm one. I had traded one kind of exile for another, quieter kind.

That double displacement — cast out by one camp for holding a position, unsettled by the vacancy I found in the other — taught me something neither camp intended to teach: that the theology, however carefully I could now defend it, was never going to be sufficient by itself. It had to be housed inside an actual, singing, praying, fellowshiping, unhedged love of God and of the people around me, or it was not going to be worth very much at all — to me, or to anyone watching.

The Ones Who Are Open

The words came after the searching, not before. On the evening of November 7, 1981, in my barracks, on my own, I found myself running through every group I could think of that stood outside the mainstream. The Mormons. The Seventh Day Adventists. The Jehovah's Witnesses. Every specialty fellowship whose name I knew. I was looking for one that taught Jesus had already kept His promise to return. I could not think of a single one. And that absence surprised me. Surely, I thought, if any group anywhere taught this, it would stand out, it would be memorable. But there was nothing.

And underneath that search sat a much older question, one I had carried for years without ever finding an answer for it. I would read the New Testament and stumble over how often it said soon. How near. This generation. And here we were, twenty centuries later. It was a question that seemed to have no honest answer, one I had simply learned to live beside.

It was in the middle of that surprise, that empty search, that a sentence arrived that I did not plan and did not fully understand even as I said it. This is the reason why I was born. I had not built up to it. It came finished, the way conviction sometimes does before comprehension has caught up to it. And looking back, what felt in the moment like a total accident, stumbling onto something nobody else seemed to teach, feels now like it was always going to happen to somebody. It simply happened to be me.

And here is the strange part that has never stopped being true. You could ask that same question today, decades later, and get the same answer. There are individual Preterists. There are scattered voices. But there is no fellowship, no denomination with scheduled services from city to city, from country to country, that stands on this ground and calls it home.

That absence became personal in 1994, when I was expelled from a house church for sharing these beliefs with fellow Christians after the service had ended. It was not the first time. I had already been humiliated at a restaurant table over this very issue, watched the temperature of a room drop the moment the subject came up. But 1994 was when the pattern stopped feeling like bad luck and started feeling like data. I realized, with a kind of finality, that this was not something most people wanted to know. Not because they lacked curiosity, but because curiosity and willingness are different things. Something that upends the shape of the whole New Testament story is, to most people, not intriguing. It is daunting. It sits off the beaten path, and off the beaten path can feel, to a cautious conscience, uncomfortably close to forbidden.

That was the turning point. I stopped throwing myself at people's feet. You cannot argue a fellowship into existence one startled dinner guest at a time. What you can do is go looking for the people who are already open to the possibility, however few, and then do the harder work, the slower work, of building something with them that outlasts any one of us. Not a monument to being right. A legacy. A place for people not yet born to stand on ground that would otherwise have to be rediscovered from scratch every generation.

I was trying to name that place before I had any people to put in it. Israel of God. Assemblies of this, assemblies of that, nothing landed.

Then, on an early America Online account, typing out the screen name I actually wanted, Bible Student *Activist*, a typo dropped a letter and gained one, and what came back was a word I had never seen before. *Atavist*. I had to look it up to confirm it was even a real word. It was, and the definition stopped me cold. A reversion to an ancestral form, a child who resembles the grandfather rather than the father. I realized immediately that I was not looking at a naming accident. I was looking at the name. This was never going to be a church that took its bearings from the early church fathers. It was going to reach past them, back to the apostolic grandfathers, back to the New Testament read in its own voice, inside its own civilizational world, before centuries of accumulated assumption had settled over it like dust.

That is what sits underneath everything else in this book. The New Kids on the Block are not new because novelty was the goal. They are new because for nineteen centuries this reading of the New Testament has lain dormant, latent in the text itself, an open secret waiting for readers with the heart, the eyes, and the mind to see what was always there. We are not trying to build a church that only talks about the end times. We are trying to recover a whole and balanced

Christian life, in which eschatology is a real and load-bearing part of the New Testament's own argument, not the entirety of it, and not something bolted on afterward for its own sake.

What Actually Works — Moderation and Patience

What actually seems to work is not a sequence to master but a posture to keep: moderation, patience, and skill, held together. Paul tells the Philippians, “Let your moderation be known unto all men” (Philippians 4:5).

He tells Titus that sound teaching itself must be delivered so that opponents are left with no fault to point to (Titus 2:7–8) — teaching that is not merely true but skillfully and winsomely true. He tells Timothy to preach the word and to “reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2), pairing correction with patience rather than setting the two against each other. James adds that the wisdom from above is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated” (James 3:17–18), and Peter instructs believers to always be ready to give an answer, but to do it “with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15–16). None of these texts hand us a strategy for winning an argument. They describe a character to keep while making one — and the two practices that follow are simply what that character looks like in the room.

First, let the affirmation come first and stay first. Jesus kept every promise He made to His own generation, on time, without exception. That's a sentence a Futurist can sit with, because it sounds like higher confidence in Christ's faithfulness, not lower.

Second, let the historical scaffolding come second — as a question, not a correction.

“What do you think happened to the Temple and the nation between the cross and, say, the second century? Does the New Testament itself seem to keep looking past the cross toward something still ahead?”

That's not asking anyone to concede to Atavism. It's just noticing there might be a room past the one they've been living in.

And here is the part worth remembering on the days the silence stings the most: patience with this sequence is not capitulation, and it is not evidence that the position is too fragile to state plainly. It is simply respecting the fact that nobody adopts a new piece of furniture for their whole house in one sitting.

Some of the best conversations Atavists and Full Preterists will ever have — with Futurists, and honestly with each other, given how

much still divides an AD 70 terminus from a Bar Kokhba terminus — happen only after someone has decided you're not dangerous. That decision is rarely won by the strength of an argument delivered in round one. It's won by the accumulated evidence, over months or years, that you're the same steady, faithful, textually serious person in round twenty that you were in round one — still convinced, still kind, still willing to let the relationship outlast the disagreement.

What We Ask For — Petitions, Not Demands

All of this, in the end, has to answer to something larger than our own vindication, or it is not worth saying aloud. It is not about us, and it was never meant to be about being proven right in front of people who once doubted us. It is about the kingdom of God, and about what most brings Him glory in the widest possible sense — across Atavist, Full Preterist, and Futurist alike, since all of us, whatever our disagreements, are still meant to be found at the same table in the end.

With that in mind, these seem like petitions worth bringing to God together, as long-range goals rather than short-term wins:

First, that the whole Body's public witness before a watching world matter more to us than any one camp's vindication — since Christ

Himself tied the world's belief to the visible unity of His people (John 17:20–23), and factionalism over these particulars, however doctrinally serious, is a cost charged against that witness regardless of who turns out to be right.

Second, that historical literacy about the Second Temple period and the Commonwealth's own terminal history spread as ordinary Christian education — not as a Preterist talking point to be defended, but as recovered common ground that softens, for the generation after ours, the shock of encountering something with no shelf to sit on.

Third, that our own patience and steadiness — sustained across years of being misread, disfellowshipped, or merely regarded from a polite distance — do more of the actual persuasive work than any single argument ever could, and that this patience be formed in us as fruit of the Spirit, not deployed as a tactic.

Fourth, that Futurist brothers and sisters who encounter these ideas be met, every time, with a charity sturdy enough that disagreement, if it remains after a fair hearing, remains ordinary disagreement between brothers rather than grounds for suspicion or exile.

Fifth, that wherever any of our own circles have let singing, fellowship, sound Trinitarian confession, or the plain welcome of every tribe and tongue go missing in favor of the argument, that vacancy be filled again — not for the sake of appearances, but because a hollowed-out house was never the goal, however right the house's foundation.

Sixth, that whatever shape of consensus the wider Church eventually reaches on these questions, if any, the outcome serve God's glory rather than any writer's, camp's, or generation's reputation — held, even by those of us convinced we are contending for a truth that has been buried a very long time, with an open hand.

Closer — The Furniture and the Table

The New Kids on the Block don't stay new forever. They just have to survive long enough to become merely familiar — and familiar, it turns out, is most of what trust ever required in the first place.

So we put the chair down in the room. We don't demand they redecorate. We sit in it. We live. We let them see it's not a trap door. We let them see it holds weight — the weight of Scripture, the weight of Christ's faithfulness, the weight of a life that still looks like Jesus after round twenty.

And if, after twenty rounds, they still don't want the chair — we stay at the table anyway. Because the table is bigger than the chair. And the kingdom is bigger than the camp. And the glory of God is worth more than our vindication. Familiar is most of what trust ever required in the first place.

Appendix A.

A Brief Statement of Faith

What follows is offered for readers who want specifics rather than generalities — the actual content of what we believe, stated plainly, so that no one has to guess or assume.

What We Confess

We confess one God, eternally existing in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — truly and equally God, undivided in essence, distinct in person. It is the ground everything else in this book stands on.

We confess Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and God, the Second Person of the Trinity — truly God and truly man, virgin-born, sinless, crucified, and bodily raised on the third day.

We confess the Holy Spirit as God, the Third Person of the Trinity, who indwells and empowers those who belong to Christ.

We confess salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth — not by works, lest anyone should boast.

We confess the Church as His body, and Christians as His new covenant people, called out of every nation to belong to Him.

We confess His Kingdom — that it came with power, on schedule, exactly where He said it would: 1,260 days before the cessation of the Tamid offerings in the Second Temple, on 26 Tevet 3827 (January 31, 67 CE). Revelation itself marks this as the moment “the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ” arrived (Revelation 12:10), war breaking out in heaven and the accuser cast down (Revelation 12:7–9) — and remarkably, a Roman historian writing decades later, with no stake in the claim, recorded the same night sky over Judea as convulsed with portents of war (Tacitus, *Histories* 5.13). Scripture and a hostile secular witness converge on the same event, the same season, independently.

This last confession is the one this whole book has been circling. It is not a footnote to our faith — it is very nearly the whole of it. Almost every Christian who reads this page will have been taught that this particular promise never came due. We are confessing, plainly, that it did.

Our Distinctives — The Four

Foundations of Atavist Theology

Beyond this confession, four convictions distinguish the Atavist framework specifically:

First, we are unequivocally Trinitarian. The historic Christian confession of one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is foundational to our faith and our interpretation of Scripture.

Second, we embrace Open Theism, sometimes called “dynamic omniscience.” We believe God is genuinely relational, that human choices are real and meaningful, and that the future remains open in ways that honor both divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Third, we recognize the Hasmonean Kingdom (142–63 BC) as the overlooked fourth kingdom of biblical prophecy — the missing piece that makes sense of messianic expectation and prophetic timelines in the New Testament era.

Fourth, we hold that New Testament prophecy was fulfilled within one cohort generation, roughly AD 26–136 — taking Jesus’ own time indicators (“this generation shall not pass”) at face value, as His first audience would have understood them.

These four convictions form a coherent whole: a God who relates dynamically to His creation, who worked through the Hasmonean period to set the stage for Messiah, and who fulfilled His promises within the timeframe He specified, in the world of Second Temple Judaism that shaped the prophetic imagination of the New Testament writers.

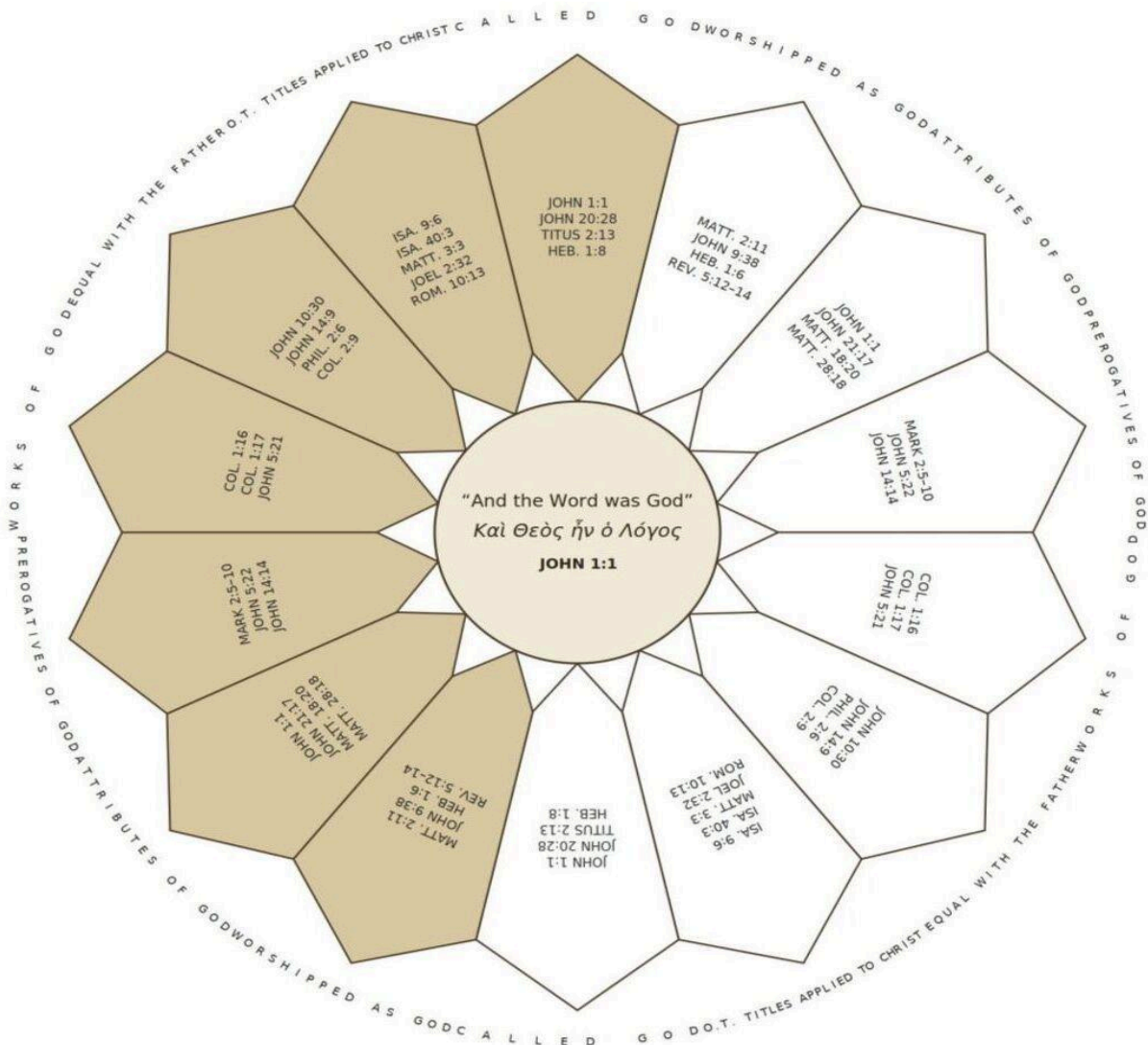
Appendix B.

The Deity of Christ

Because the deity of Jesus is the true center of Christian confession – the ground of every camp in this conversation stands on together – the chart above gathers the scriptural evidence in one place.

Figure 1 — The Deity of Christ

Called by God's names, sharing God's works, receiving God's worship — the New Testament writers place Jesus inside the identity of Israel's one God.



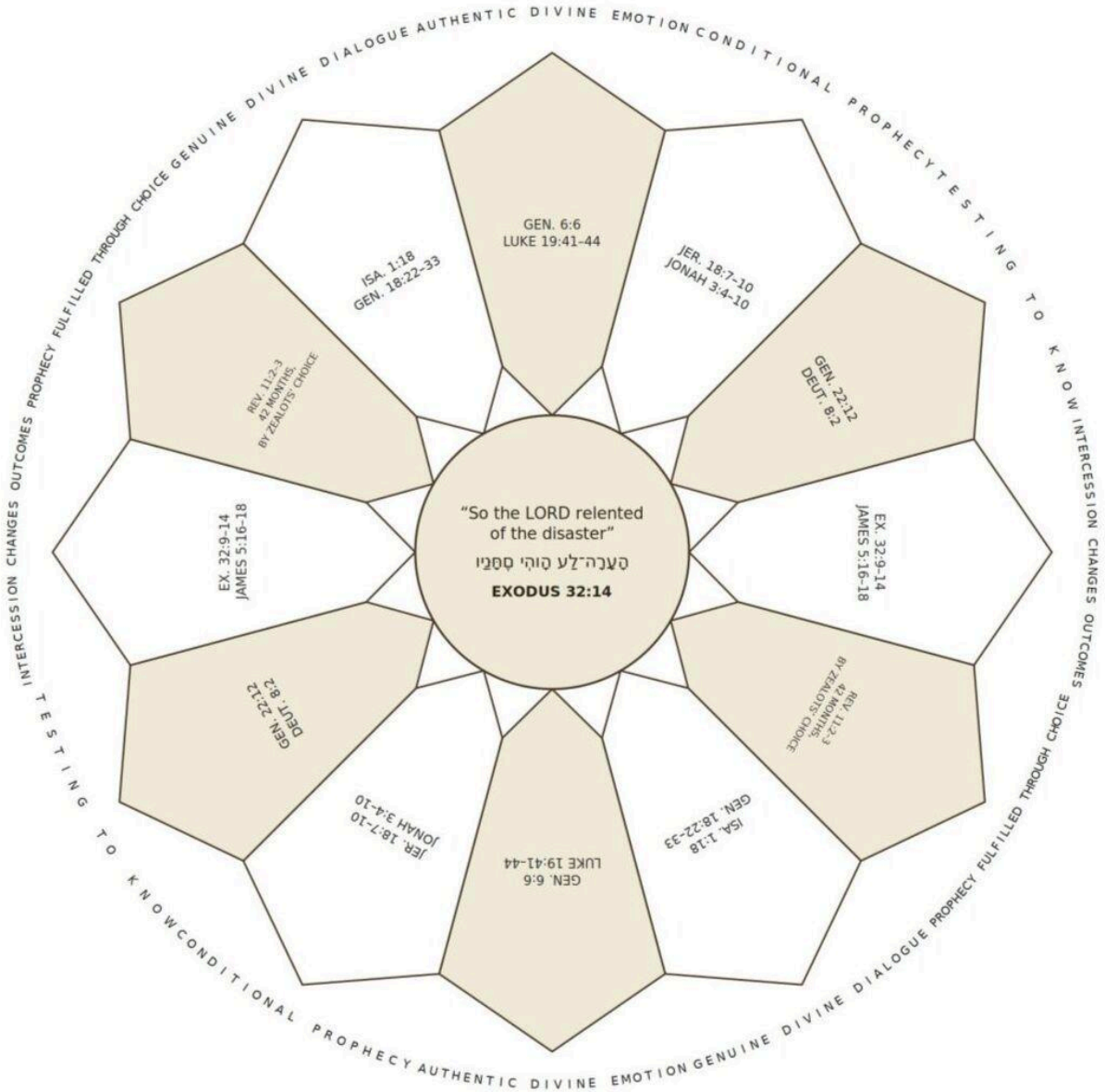
To be clear about what this chart is and is not: it is not new argumentation and it is not distinctive to Atavism in any way. Every line of evidence gathered here is affirmed as ordinary Christology from one end of the New Testament to the other. So this is a confession being illustrated, not invented out of whole cloth.

Appendix C.

Open Theism — The Sovereignty of Genuine Freedom

Figure 2 — The Sovereignty of Genuine Freedom

A God secure enough in His sovereignty to grieve, to test, to answer prayer, and to keep His word through the real, contingent choices of His creatures.



Open Theism is not a footnote to Atavist theology, and it deserves more than a passing mention. It is one of the four convictions the whole framework stands on, and readers coming from a classical or Reformed background deserve a fair account of what it claims and does not claim — not a caricature, and not an afterthought.

Open Theism is offered here as a conviction, not a proof, and readers should know upfront what kind of chart follows. It is not a list of texts marshaled to defeat classical theism, and no reader needs to adopt it to affirm anything else in this book. It is, instead, the position that seems to us the most defensible reading of God's relationship to His creation across the whole of Scripture — not because any single verse demands it, but because it is the shape of the narrative itself, beginning in Genesis with a God who walks in the garden, asks Adam where he is, and grieves that He made man, and carrying, without a break in that character, all the way through to Revelation, where prayers still move outcomes and the future is still described as genuinely contested ground. A God who related to His creation this way at the beginning of the story, and relates to it this way at the story's end, is, on the plainest reading, the same God relating the same way throughout.

The heart of the position is this: God's sovereignty is not diminished by genuine interaction with His creatures — it is displayed by it. A

sovereignty that requires every outcome to be fixed in advance is, on this view, a smaller sovereignty than one secure enough to work through real human choices, real prayers that change outcomes, and real warnings whose fulfillment depends on the response they receive. Scripture repeatedly describes God grieving, relenting, testing to find out, and answering intercession — not as accommodated language for creatures who can't handle the truth, but as an accurate picture of how God actually relates to time and to us.

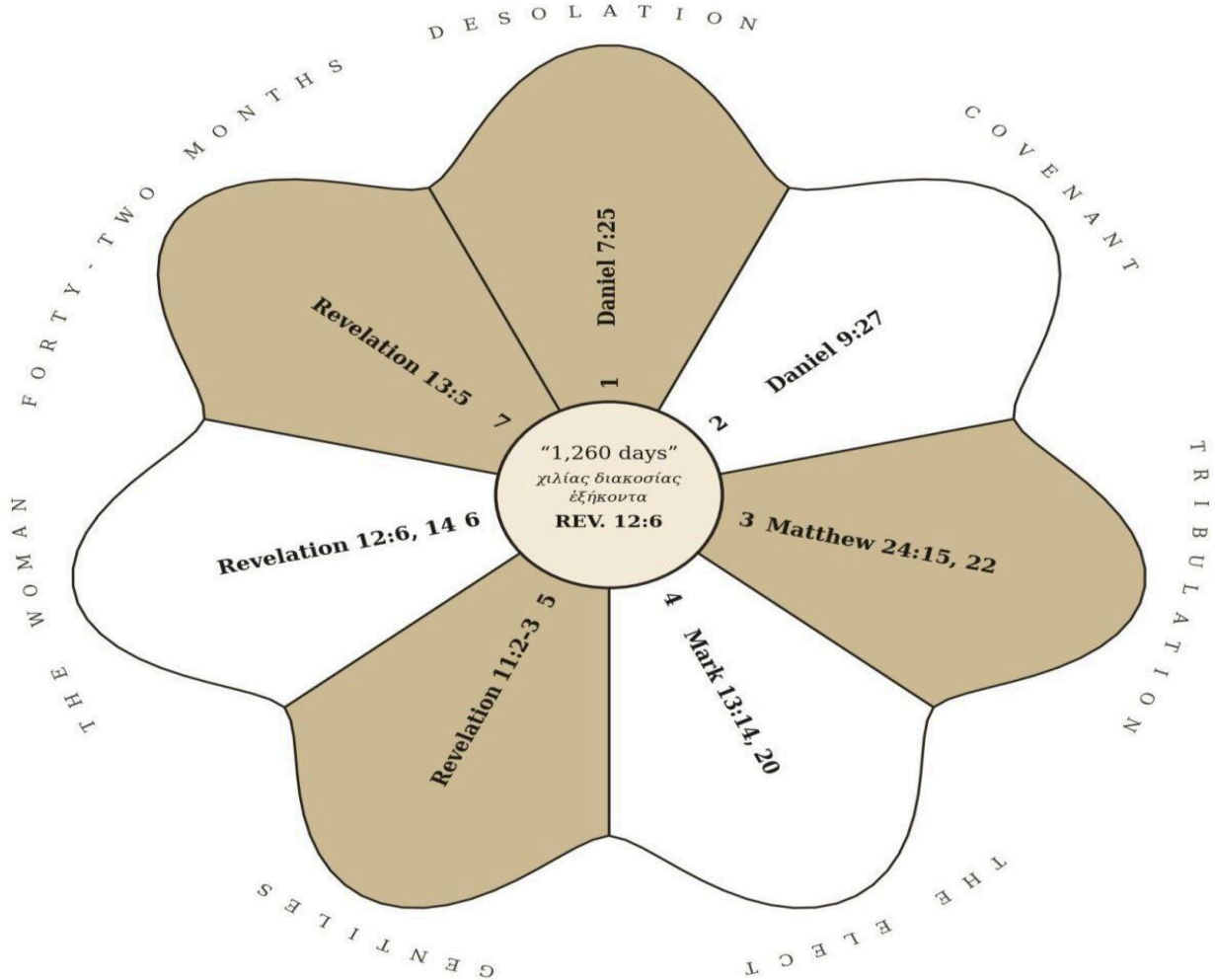
One example bears directly on the argument at the center of this book. Revelation's prophecy of a forty-two-month occupation of the holy city (Revelation 11:2–3) was fulfilled with striking precision — and it was fulfilled through the actual, contingent decisions of the Zealot factions who occupied Jerusalem and the Temple during the terminal years of the Commonwealth. The specificity of the fulfillment and the genuineness of the human choices that produced it are not in tension. They are the same event, described from two sides. That is what dated, historically-anchored prophecy looks like under Open Theism: not a script forced onto unwilling actors, but a sovereignty patient and skillful enough to keep its word through people who were, at every step, free to do otherwise.

The chart below gathers six lines of biblical evidence for this picture of God — offered, like the chart in Appendix B, as a verifiable account rather than an argument to be won.

Appendix D.

Figure 3 — The Time Clock of the Second Temple

Seven witnesses, one span — 1,260 days, 26 Tevet 3827 to 17 Tammuz 3831
(January 31, 67 CE to July 14, 70 CE).



*Seven independent biblical texts, read plainly,
converge on a single dated span — not seven separate events.*

The chronology at the center of this book rests on more than one witness. Daniel names the span. Matthew and Mark echo it in the Olivet Discourse. Revelation returns to it three separate times, in three different images — a court trampled underfoot, a woman fleeing into the wilderness (named twice), and a beast given limited authority.

Seven texts, one number. The chart above lays out that convergence plainly, the same way Appendices B and C laid out the convergence behind the deity of Christ and the character of God: not as new argumentation, but as a plain accounting of what is already there in the text, open for anyone to verify against their own Bible.

Seven witnesses, but perhaps not only seven. Paul never dates the days or numbers the months, and so he does not appear on the wheel above. But read on a chronology that places his first Corinthian correspondence inside the crisis rather than a decade ahead of it, his words in 1 Corinthians 7:26–31 stop sounding like a general’s forecast delivered from behind the lines and start sounding like a soldier’s letter home. “The present distress.” “The time is short.” “The fashion of this world passeth away.”

Three separate phrases, three separate verses, and every one of them cast in the present tense, not the future. Paul is not predicting the

compression. He is describing it, from inside it, the same way a man describes weather he is currently standing in rather than weather he expects next season.

That is what makes him worth naming here even without a place on the chart. Daniel supplies the number. Matthew and Mark supply the warning. Revelation supplies the imagery, three times over, in three different figures. And Paul, writing as a pastor rather than a prophet, supplies something none of the other six do: the sound of an ordinary congregation being told to reorder its most basic decisions, marriage, mourning, buying, keeping, because the clock the other six had already started was now audibly running out. Seven witnesses to a date. An eighth, unlabeled, to what it felt like to live inside it.

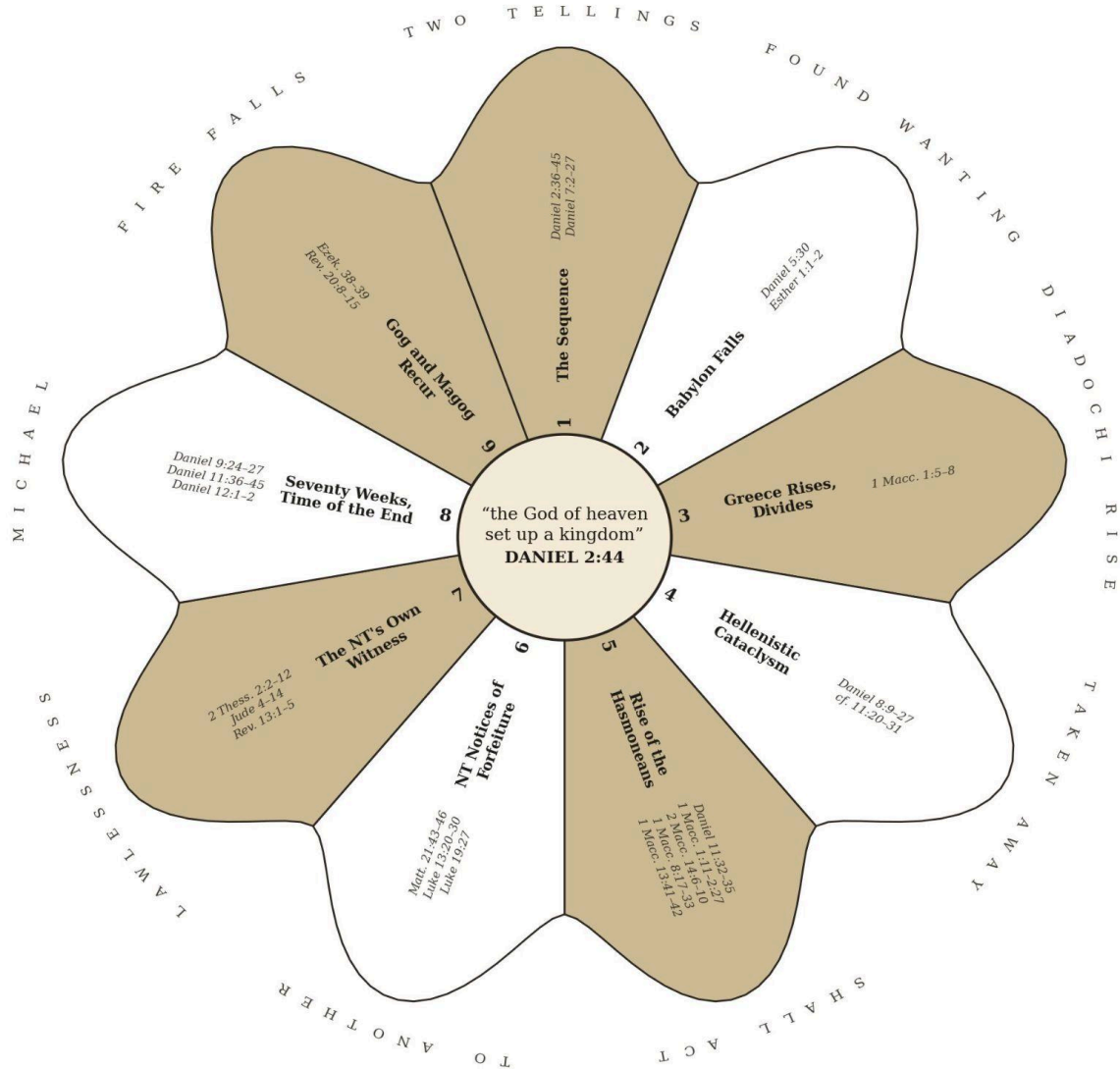
Appendix E.

The Fourth Kingdom

Daniel 7:25 and Daniel 9:27 both name the same power under two different descriptions — “a time and times and the dividing of time,” and a ruler who “shall confirm the covenant with many” before breaking it — and both depend for their force on correctly identifying the kingdom in view. The standard reading supplies Rome, largely because Rome was still standing centuries later when the church needed an empire large enough to blame. But imperial memory is not the same thing as textual argument, and read plainly, Daniel’s own sequence — Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and “a fourth kingdom” — points not to Rome but to the Hasmonean state, the last native Jewish kingdom before Rome absorbed the province outright. It began with Judas Maccabeus’s revolt against Antiochus IV, secured full political sovereignty under Simon and his successors, ruled as an increasingly fractured and blood-soaked monarchy for roughly eighty years, and finally collapsed under its own civil war into a client relationship with Rome in 63 BC, when Pompey took Jerusalem to settle a domestic quarrel between two Hasmonean brothers neither of whom could govern without him.

That kingdom, not Rome, is Daniel’s fourth beast — “diverse from all the kingdoms” not because it was foreign but because it was

Figure 4 — The Four Kingdoms and the Kingdom of God
From Babylon to the Great Mountain — nine witnesses to a kingdom transferred, not delayed



Nine witnesses, one arc: a native kingdom rises, breaks its own covenant, and is transferred rather than destroyed — a transfer both Testaments describe as already underway.

native and still managed to devour itself. Every citation to Daniel on the Time Clock above, and every date drawn from it, rests on this identification.

Appendix F.

The Four Kingdoms and the Kingdom of God

Appendix E made the case for the Hasmonean identification of Daniel's fourth kingdom in prose. The chart below makes the same case in full, tracing the whole arc rather than just its terminus — from Babylon's fall, through the Medo-Persian and Hellenistic kingdoms, into the Hasmonean state itself, through the New Testament's own witnesses to its forfeiture, and on to the final judgment scene that closes the story John borrows from Ezekiel's Gog and Magog. Nine clusters, drawn from both Testaments and from the Maccabean histories that sit between them, converging on a single claim: the kingdom named in Daniel 2:44 was not deferred to some still-future moment, but transferred, in real time, to the generation that watched it happen.

Appendix G.

A Note on the Atavist Canon

A note is owed here on which Bible this book actually uses. True Christian Press publishes from the King James Version for its readability and its familiarity across English-speaking audiences, but the canon underneath that translation, the actual list of books treated as Scripture, is the historic canon: the sixty-six books held in common with the Protestant tradition, plus the deuterocanonical books, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and the Greek additions to Esther and Daniel. For roughly 1,500 years this was simply the Christian Bible, East and West alike, not a Catholic addition to be defended but the shared inheritance every tradition received, until the Reformation redrew the boundary in the sixteenth century. This is not a stylistic preference. 1 Maccabees in particular is the single best surviving narrative of the Hasmonean kingdom identified in Appendix E as Daniel's fourth beast, written by someone with direct access to the events and figures involved, and a chronology that treats the Hasmonean period as prophetically load-bearing has no honest way to set that book aside as merely interesting background reading. Where this book cites Josephus and Tacitus for the war years of AD 66 to 70, it cites 1 and 2 Maccabees for the two centuries that made those war years possible in the first place.

Figure 5 — The Canon in Historical Order

For roughly 1,500 years, this was simply the Christian Bible — East and West alike — until the Reformation redrew the boundary in the sixteenth century.

Old Testament

The Torah Genesis • Exodus • Leviticus • Numbers Deuteronomy
Patriarchal Wisdom Job
Conquest & Judges Joshua • Judges • Ruth
The Monarchy 1 Samuel • 2 Samuel • 1 Kings • 2 Kings 1 Chronicles • 2 Chronicles
Davidic / Solomonic Wisdom Psalms • Proverbs • Ecclesiastes • Song of Songs Wisdom • Sirach
Isaiah & Contemporaries Isaiah • Hosea • Amos • Micah • Jonah • Joel Obadiah
Jeremiah / Ezekiel Era Jeremiah • Lamentations • Baruch • Ezekiel Zephaniah • Nahum • Habakkuk
Daniel (with Greek Additions) Daniel • Susanna • Bel and the Dragon Song of the Three Young Men
Post-Exilic / Hasmonean Ezra • Nehemiah • Tobit • Judith • Esther Haggai • Zechariah • Malachi • 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees

New Testament

The Synoptics Matthew • Mark • Luke
Acts Acts
Pauline Letters to Churches 1 Corinthians • 2 Corinthians • Galatians Ephesians • Philippians • Colossians 1 Thessalonians • 2 Thessalonians
Pauline Letters to Individuals 1 Timothy • 2 Timothy • Titus • Philemon
Romans (penned by Tertius) Romans
Hebrews & James Hebrews • James
1 Peter (penned by Silas) 1 Peter
2 Peter & Jude 2 Peter • Jude
The Johannine Corpus John • 1 John • 2 John • 3 John
Revelation <i>To the seven churches of Roman Asia</i> Ephesus • Smyrna • Pergamos Thyatira • Sardis • Philadelphia Laodicea

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