

The Fathers on the Future

A 2nd-Century Eschatology for the 21st-Century Church Brief Summaries of Chapters and Excurses

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Initially created as an experiment by the author to test Adobe's AI Assistant, the following single-paragraph summaries for the 21 chapters of *The Fathers on the Future* and single-sentence summaries for the 29 supplemental Go Deeper Excurses were subsequently edited by the author. The result of this process is provided below as an aid in understanding the flow of the argument of the book. These summaries are not in themselves sufficient to weigh the evidence and arguments of the book and excurses.

Chapter 1—Putting Eschatology (Back) in Its Place

Chapter 1 critiques sensationalistic and uninformed approaches to eschatology, advocating for a return to a second-century “Irenaeus” eschatology and a more nuanced understanding based on biblical, theological, and historical foundations. The chapter also provides a brief historical overview of eschatological developments from the early church to the modern era, highlighting the diversity of perspectives held by Christians throughout history.

Go Deeper Excursus 1: *Who Was Irenaeus of Lyons and Why Does He Matter?*

Excursus 1 introduces Irenaeus of Lyons, touching on his life, theological influences, writings, conservative approach to theology, potential weaknesses in his reliability, and his importance for understanding the church's earliest, widespread, and foundational eschatological views of the second century.

Chapter 2—The Drama of Creation, Fall, and Redemption

Chapter 2 discusses the biblical narrative of creation, fall, and redemption, emphasizing the theme of God's plan for humanity from the beginning. It delves into the concept of the

imago Dei mission—humanity created with the mandate to expand the heaven-sent realm of paradise and exercise dominion over creation. The chapter explores the progression from Adam and Eve's task in the Paradise to the covenant with Abraham, God's mediated theocratic rule, the Mosaic covenant, and the Davidic covenant, leading to leading to the anticipation of a future perfect king, the Messiah, who will ultimately restore Paradise to the world, thus fulfilling the Imago Dei mission.

Go Deeper Excursus 2: *Had Adam and Eve Eaten from the Tree of Life?*

Excursus 2 discusses the debate surrounding whether Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of life before the fall, with arguments from various historical and contemporary interpreters supporting the view that they had, in fact, partaken of the tree's fruit for the sustenance of physical life, but they were ultimately cut off from its nourishing fruit when they were expelled from paradise.

Chapter 3—Introduction to Future Things: The Three “R”s of Eschatology

Chapter 3 discusses the three fundamental beliefs that all orthodox Christians agree upon regarding eschatology: the *return* of Christ as

judge and king, the *resurrection* of the dead (both righteous and wicked), and the *restoration* of creation. It emphasizes the importance of these beliefs as the foundation of Christian eschatology, despite the diversity of opinions on other details surrounding future events. The chapter describes the different perspectives within premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism, highlighting nuances and variations within each tradition. It concludes by stressing the unity among orthodox Christians in the core beliefs of Christ's return, resurrection, and restoration.

Go Deeper Excursus 3: *Bodily Resurrection in the History of the Church*

Excursus 3 discusses the concept of bodily resurrection in early Christianity, highlighting the opposition from groups like the Gnostics and the strong affirmation of this belief by key figures like Polycarp, Irenaeus, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, and later doctrinal affirmations by councils and various Christian traditions as a doctrine believed everywhere, always, and by all.

Chapter 4—The Kingdom of God in Biblical and Theological Perspective

Chapter 4 discusses the concept of the kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven) as presented in Scripture, proposing a multifaceted nature of the kingdom, encompassing God's universal rule, earthly kingdoms, the people of Israel, the messianic kingdom, and the church. Additionally, it delves into the relationship between the kingdom and Paradise, suggesting that the return of paradise to earth is inextricably linked to the coming eschatological kingdom and the transformation of the world—the ultimate fulfillment of God's will on earth as in heaven through the kingdom. The chapter concludes that the kingdom of God is a realization of divine virtues, values, principles, and priorities in the earthly realm.

Go Deeper Excursus 4: *"Your Will Be Done" as "Your Kingdom Come"*

Excursus 4 argues that the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, "may your will be done," is best interpreted as appositional to the second petition, "may your kingdom come," concluding that God's kingdom is realized as his will is accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.

Chapter 5—The Earliest Fathers and the Coming Kingdom

Chapter 5 delves into the early precedence of Irenaean premillennialism and the subsequent rise of amillennialism in the early church. It explores factors contributing to the decline of premillennialism and the ascent of amillennialism, including perceptions of sophistication, philosophical influences, allegorical interpretation of Scripture, political changes, and increasing anti-Judaism. The chapter also highlights the importance of understanding the early fathers' interpretations of biblical texts to grasp the development of eschatological positions.

Go Deeper Excursus 5: *Ancient and Modern Challenges to Early Premillennial Testimonies*

Excursus 5 discusses challenges to the belief that premillennial eschatology was the earliest widespread view in the early church, focusing on the attempts to associate millennialism with specific regions or groups like "Jewish Christianity" and the debate surrounding Papias of Hierapolis's relationship with the apostle John, as well as the differing views on the millennial kingdom held by early Christian writers.

Go Deeper Excursus 6: *The Eschatology of Didache 16*

Excursus 6 expounds the eschatological section of Didache 16, which warns of the coming of the end times, the advent of a deceiving figure, the need for perseverance, and the expectation of a partial resurrection of the righteous at Christ's return, suggesting a two-part resurrection consistent with early premillennialism.

Go Deeper Excursus 7: *The Chiliasm of the Epistle of Barnabas*

Excursus 7 exegetes Barnabas 15, emphasizing the author's interpretation of the seventh and eighth days in relation to a future kingdom and the renewal of creation, contrasting it with later interpretations that attempt to downplay or deny its chiliastic eschatology, and demonstrating that the author of the Epistle of Barnabas was undoubtedly a premillennialist.

Go Deeper Excursus 8: *The Coming Kingdom in Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus*

Excursus 8 discusses the eschatological beliefs of Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian of Carthage, and Hippolytus of Rome, focusing on their views on the coming kingdom, the resurrection of the just, the millennial reign of Christ, and the eternal kingdom.

Go Deeper Excursus 9: *The Advent and Advance of Amillennialism*

Excursus 9 explores the development of amillennial and antichiliastic eschatology in early Christianity, focusing on the views of theologians like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Dionysius, and Eusebius, as well as the suppression of early premillennial writings with the rise of amillennialism in later centuries.

Chapter 6—The Collage of the Coming Kingdom in the Old Testament

Chapter 6 discusses the interpretation of Old Testament prophecies regarding the coming kingdom, emphasizing a spectrum of views from the fantastic to the figurative to the photographic. It presents the results of a detailed analysis of key passages from Isaiah to Zechariah, highlighting a consistent portrayal of a future messianic reign of righteousness, justice, and peace. The chapter explores how various prophets envision the restoration and renewal and regathering of Israel under the Davidic king, the conversion and flourishing of the nations, and the transformation of creation in an edenified world. It also advocates for a both/and approach to Old Testament prophecies consistent with the New Testament and early church fathers, which allows for a spiritual application in the present church

while anticipating a future literal fulfillment in the coming kingdom.

Go Deeper Excursus 10: *What Are We Seeing in Old Testament Prophecy: Fantasy, Photo, or Figure?*

Excursus 10 discusses three possible approaches to interpreting the poetic and figurative language of Old Testament prophecies: the fantastic view sees the language as symbolic with no real-world referents, the photographic view takes the language literally as describing actual future events, and the figurative view—the perspective adopted in *The Fathers on the Future*—acknowledges symbolic imagery pointing to real future events while allowing for spiritual application.

Go Deeper Excursus 11: *The Coming Kingdom in the Old Testament: Detailed Analysis of Key Passages*

Excursus 11 extensively expositis all key passages related to the future messianic kingdom in the Old Testament prophets, highlighting themes of restoration, repentance, divine deliverance, the role of the Messiah, and the establishment of a future kingdom marked by justice, peace, and prosperity.

Go Deeper Excursus 12: *Expectation of the Coming Kingdom in the Intertestamental Period*

Excursus 12 explores various texts from the Intertestamental period, such as 1 Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Assumption of Moses, which depict a consistent picture of the coming kingdom with themes of judgment, restoration, the reign of the Messiah, and the establishment of a righteous and peaceful era on earth.

Go Deeper Excursus 13: *Hoekema's and Merkle's Approaches to Old Testament Restoration Prophecies*

Excursus 13 contrasts the approach to Old Testament prophecy in *The Fathers on the Future* with the representative approaches Anthony Hoekema and Benjamin Merkle to Old Testament restoration prophecies, with Hoekema emphasizing a spiritual fulfillment in the present and future, while Merkle leans towards a symbolic interpretation, leading to an understanding of the fulfillment of these prophecies in Christ and the church.

Chapter 7—The Messiah’s Promise of Renewal and Restoration

Chapter 7 delves into Jesus’ promises of renewal and restoration in the coming kingdom, drawing from Matthew 19 and 24. It discusses the anticipated restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel, the association between the “age to come” and “eternal life,” and the dual fulfillments of prophecies in the first century and the future coming of the Son of Man in glory. Tertullian’s argument against a present, spiritual resurrection in favor of a future resurrection based on the Olivet Discourse is highlighted. The teachings of Jesus are presented as encompassing both a future promise of an earthly kingdom and a present spiritual kingdom, indicating a nuanced both/and understanding of the coming kingdom.

Chapter 8—The Messianic Time of Restoration in the Book of Acts

Chapter 8 explores the expectation of the coming kingdom as depicted in the Book of Acts, particularly focusing on Acts 1:3–7 and Acts 3:19–21. It discusses the disciples’ anticipation of an earthly kingdom, Jesus redirecting their focus to the imminent arrival of the Holy Spirit, and Peter’s call for repentance leading to forgiveness and the sending of the Messiah to usher in “seasons of refreshing,” which is the time of the fulfillment of all things written by the Old Testament prophets. The interpretations of Acts 3:19–21 delve into the idea that upon repentance, the Messiah will bring about gradual restoration and refreshing, aligning with the concept of progressive cosmic redemption. Additionally, the text touches on the present manifestations of kingdom values through repentance, leading to spiritual and moral restoration on various levels.

Go Deeper Excursus 14: *The Case for Concurrent Periods in Acts 3:19–21*

Excursus 14 provides a more comprehensive exegesis of Acts 3:19–21, demonstrating that the “times of refreshing” and “restoration of all things” in Acts 3:19–21 refer to the same concurrent period that follows the coming of the Messiah from heaven and the eschatological repentance of Israel.

Chapter 9—The Pauline Expectation of the Eschatological Kingdom

Chapter 9 explores Paul’s theological foundation for the future restoration of Israel, emphasizing his expectation of a future salvation of all Israelites based on Old Testament promises in Romans 11. It discusses interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28, defending a three-stage resurrection process that favors a premillennial view of the order of resurrections. Paul’s teachings on the eschatological kingdom include the complete salvation and deliverance of a remnant of ethnic Israel in keeping with Old Testament “new covenant” promises. The chapter also highlights Paul’s use of metaphors like the olive tree to illustrate the restoration of Israel and the fulfillment of Old Testament expectations of the coming kingdom.

Go Deeper Excursus 15: *The Case for a Three-Stage Resurrection in 1 Cor 15:20–28*

Excursus 15 provides a detailed exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15:20–28, defending a three-stage resurrection with a chronological order of events involving Christ’s resurrection and ascension, his future return concurrent with the resurrection of the righteous, his earthly reign until all enemies are defeated with the subduing of all creation, and a final resurrection of the wicked.

Chapter 10—The Kingdom of Revelation 20: Introductory Issues

Chapter 10 explores different perspectives such as futurist premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism, particularly highlighting debates surrounding the interpretation of

Revelation 19:11–21 and 20:1–10 as either separate visions or a single progressive vision. An exposition of the relevant passages explores the symbolic imagery of Christ’s second coming, the defeat of evil forces, the binding of Satan, and the ultimate judgment, emphasizing the physical return of Christ and the establishment of a future kingdom rather than a spiritual victory through the preaching of the gospel or a present heavenly reign followed by the return of Christ. The document concludes by addressing the significance of Satan’s binding in Revelation 20 and its implications for the chronology of the coming kingdom, suggesting a need for a careful examination of the text to understand the eschatological events described.

Go Deeper Excursus 16: *Who, What, When, and How of Revelation: Pre-interpretive Issues*

Excursus 16 explores the varying perspectives on the divine inspiration and human influence on the Book of Revelation, discussing John’s claim to have received visions from God and the interpretive models used to understand its imagery in a way consistent with apocalyptic visions in the Old Testament.

Go Deeper Excursus 17: *Rev 19:11–20:10 as a Single Progressive Vision*

Excursus 17 exegetes Revelation 19:11–20:10, providing lexical, grammatical, syntactical, and theological arguments for identifying the subjects of the verb ἐκάθισαν (“they sat”) in Revelation 20:4 as referring back to Christ and the armies of heaven in Revelation 19:11–16, concluding that Revelation 19 and 20 is best read as a single progressive vision rather than two separate visions.

Chapter 11—The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1–3

Chapter 11 discusses the interpretation of Revelation 20:1–3, focusing on the thousand-years binding of Satan. It explores the Enochic imagery and language used in the passage, contrasting the views of premillennialists and amillennialists regarding the timing and nature

of Satan’s binding. The text delves into the implications of the release of Satan after the thousand years, the significance of the battle of Gog and Magog, and the role of the millennium in the broader context of the creation-fall-redemption narrative. The Irenaean premillennial perspective is highlighted, emphasizing a progressive renewal of creation during the millennial period leading to the ultimate defeat of sin, death, and the devil.

Go Deeper Excursus 18: *A Survey and History of Interpretations of Rev 20:1–3*

Excursus 18 discusses various interpretations of the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1–3 from postmillennial, amillennial, and premillennial perspectives throughout history, highlighting differences in views regarding the timing and nature of Satan’s binding.

Go Deeper Excursus 19: *A Critique of Beale’s Interpretation of Rev 20:1–3*

Excursus 19 provides a critique G. K. Beale’s interpretation of Revelation 20:1–3, particularly focusing on the differences in understanding the ascent of the beast and the release of the dragon from the abyss, the definition of the term “abyss,” the downplaying of 1 Enoch as a background, and the implications of the binding of demonic spirits.

Chapter 12—The Two Resurrections in Revelation 20:4–6

Chapter 12 provides a detailed comparison of premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism regarding Christ’s return, the millennium in Revelation 20, the two resurrections in Revelation 20, and the binding of Satan. Based on the key phrase οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν (“the rest of the dead”) in Revelation 20:4, it suggests that both the first resurrection and subsequent resurrection portrayed in this passage must be of the same kind—physical rather than spiritual. It explores the historical and modern interpretations of theologians like Irenaeus, Tyconius, Augustine, Warfield, and Kim Riddlebarger, discussing the exegetical challenges and theological implications of

passages like Matthew 25:46 and John 5:28–29 in the context of different eschatological views.

Go Deeper Excursus 20: A Detailed Examination of the Two Resurrections in Rev 20

Excursus 20 provides a more detailed analysis of the five interpretive scenarios regarding the two resurrections in Revelation 20, focusing on the definitions of “the rest of the dead” and “they lived,” and exploring how four of the five scenarios handle the terms in ways that lead to exegetical and theological peril.

Chapter 13—The Millennial Renewal of Heaven and Earth

Chapter 13 examines the debate regarding the fate of the present creation and the concept of a new heaven and earth. Some argue for a complete annihilation of the current universe followed by a new creation *ex nihilo*; others advocate for a renewal of the existing creation through purification and renewal. The vast majority of Christian writings from patristic, medieval, and reformation eras understand the destiny of the world in terms of renewal rather than annihilation. The chapter explores biblical passages like Isaiah 65–66, 2 Peter 3, and Revelation 21 to analyze the language of “passing away” and “new creation,” emphasizing a qualitative transformation rather than total destruction. The idea of paradise returning to earth, the connection between Edenic paradise and the future earthly paradise, and the concept of edenification during the millennial kingdom are explored as part of the renewal of heaven and earth, leading to a vision of a transformed creation.

Chapter 14—The Character of the Coming Kingdom and Its Implications

The document discusses Irenaean premillennialism, which presents a unique eschatological perspective that incorporates the best elements of amillennialism, postmillennialism, and new

creationism. It emphasizes a gradual transformation of the world through human participation in the fulfillment of the imago Dei mandate, leading to a restored paradise on earth during the millennial age ruled by Christ and his co-regents. The chapter also addresses the future of ethnic Israel in this framework, highlighting the expectation of repentance and restoration. Additionally, it explores the implications of the millennial age, including the state of individuals, the role of mortals, and the potential for expansion beyond Earth. The chapter refutes the notion that premillennialism is fatalistic or pessimistic, arguing that it can coexist with various views on the world’s condition and encourages active engagement in improving society while awaiting the full realization of God’s kingdom.

Go Deeper Excursus 21: The Future Restoration of Israel in the Early Church

Excursus 21 argues that early Christian writings from the second and third centuries, including the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Justin Martyr, express a belief in the future restoration and salvation of ethnic Israel, envisioning a regathering and fulfillment of Old Testament promises alongside the application of these promises to the church.

Chapter 15—The Day of the Lord in the Old Testament

Chapter 15 discusses the concept of the “Day of the Lord” in the Old Testament, emphasizing that יום יהוה refers not a single day but to a prolonged period of God’s mediated theophanic visitation in judgment, often involving natural means like famine, warfare, and other calamities. The chapter also explains how the technical concept of the “Day of the Lord” develops from repeated historical fulfillments in anticipation of ultimate eschatological fulfillment through the Old Testament prophets, apocryphal writings, and Qumran texts. The conclusion highlights that the New Testament adopts this technical concept of the “Day of the

Lord” rooted in Old Testament language and imagery, with Jesus Christ executing the ultimate fulfillment as the divine Judge and King, bringing both judgment over an extended period of eschatological tribulation.

Go Deeper Excursus 22: *The Old Testament and the Day of the Lord*

Excursus 22 demonstrates through a comprehensive exposition of every relevant Old Testament “Day of the Lord” passage that concept of the יום יהוה involves imminent judgment through God’s mediated theophanic visitation, characterized by wrath and destruction against the wicked nations, with the hope of deliverance for the righteous and a future ultimate manifestation of God’s judgment, often with stock language and imagery.

Chapter 16—The Day of the Lord Concept in the New Testament

Chapter 16 explores the “Day of the Lord” in the New Testament, particularly in the writings of Paul and Peter. Both authors emphasize the anticipation of Christ’s judgment, the purification of the world, and the salvation of believers from the coming wrath. They draw on Old Testament imagery to convey the idea of a future period of judgment that will make way for the establishment of a new heavens and a new earth in keeping with Old Testament prophecies. Overall, the Day of the Lord is depicted as a period of judgment, wrath, and purification, with believers encouraged to live holy lives in anticipation of Christ’s return.

Go Deeper Excursus 23: *Joel 2 in Acts 2: The Day of the Lord in Peter’s Sermon*

Excursus 23 discusses Peter’s Pentecost message in Acts 2, where he quotes from the prophet Joel to explain the outpouring of the Spirit and the impending judgment as one of many iterations of the Day of the Lord, urging his listeners to repent or suffer coming judgment.

Go Deeper Excursus 24: *The Last Trumpet in 1 Cor 15:52 vs. the Seventh Trumpet in Rev 11:15*

Excursus 24 demonstrates that the “last trumpet” of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11:15 cannot have the same referent and that very few commentators attempt to equate the two because of the deep problems associated with their equation.

Deeper Excursus 25: *Who (or What) Is the Restrainer in 2 Thess 2?*

Excursus 25 proposes an identification of the restraining one/thing in 2 Thessalonians 2 by demonstrating a clear pattern among earliest Christian writers that taught the church empowered by the Spirit presently restrains wickedness and holds back the coming judgment.

Chapter 17—The Impending Day of the Lord

Chapter 17 explores the earliest historical understandings of the coming Day of the Lord, especially the figure that came to be known as the “antichrist.” Fathers like Irenaeus and Hippolytus envisioned a future ultimate antichrist figure who would rule for three and a half years—the latter half of Daniel’s “seventieth week” (Dan 9), connecting this figure to prophecies especially in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13. The chapter also delves into other events often related to the future seven-year Day of the Lord period of judgment, leading up to the physical return of Christ to this earth.

Go Deeper Excursus 26: *The Mystery of Babylon the Great*

Excursus 26 discusses the interpretation of the symbolic figure of Babylon in the Book of Revelation, ultimately suggesting that the symbol of “the great city ruling over the kings of the earth” is likely a future apostate Jerusalem serving as the capital of the antichrist’s empire, not the literal city of Babylon or Rome.

Chapter 18—Irenaeus and the Assumption of the Church

Chapter 18 visits the question of Irenaeus’s position on the assumption (or “rapture”) of the church and its relationship to the coming seven-year Day of the Lord tribulation period. Irenaeus presents a nuanced perspective, suggesting that only the prepared “spiritual” believers will be caught up prior to the tribulation, while others will endure the period of judgment for purification. This view is influenced by Irenaeus’s soteriology and ecclesiology, which differ from later Augustinian/Calvinist perspectives that emphasize an irrevocable election. The chapter also references the Shepherd of Hermas to provide context for understanding a possible influence on Irenaeus’s “partial pre-tribulation rapture” position.

Go Deeper Excursus 27: *Escape from the Coming Wrath in the Shepherd of Hermas*

Excursus 27 presents Hermas’s view on the concept of rescue from the coming period of wrath in Visions 2, 3, and 4, which emphasize the need for immediate repentance in order to escape the coming tribulation period.

Chapter 19—The Assumption of the church in the New Testament

Chapter 19 discusses and evaluates various arguments for the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine. It mentions the emergence of the pre-tribulation rapture belief in the 1800s, the use of the term “rapture” in the Bible, the relationship between the trumpet and the Day of the Lord, the promise of rescue from wrath, the issue of mortals repopulating the millennium, the removal of the restrainer, the return of Christ “for” and “with” the saints, the absence of the term “church” in Revelation, and the concept of imminency.

Go Deeper Excursus 28: *The Rapture of the Church in 1 Thess 4:17 as an Actual Event*

Excursus 28 delves into the interpretation of the terms ἀπάντησις and ἀρπάζω in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, demonstrating that the language does not point to a metaphor of a ruler being met by a greeting party but to an actual event of being caught up, confirmed by numerous church fathers throughout the patristic period who understood the passage as referring to a literal catching up of saints to meet the Lord in the air.

Chapter 20—An Exegetical Argument for the Timing of the Assumption

Chapter 20 presents Revelation 12:5 as an original exegetical argument for a pre-tribulation rapture from at least the nineteenth century, demonstrating that the figure of the “male son” caught up to God and his throne symbolizes the corporate body of Christ, the church, rather than Christ alone. This interpretation is supported by parallels with Old Testament passages like Isaiah 66:7 and Daniel 7:13, confirming the image points to a corporate body rather than an individual. The chapter also explores connections with Isaiah 26:16–27:1 and Revelation 12, highlighting themes of tribulation, resurrection, protection, and judgment, which point towards the church’s spiritual birth and rescue from impending wrath by resurrection. Additionally, it discusses how the male son in Revelation is associated with ruling over nations, drawing on Psalm 2:9 and linking the promises of dominion to both Christ and the church (Rev 2:26–27), reinforcing the idea of corporate identity between Christ and his body, the church. This identification of the male son as the body of Christ and his catching up as the rapture places the event prior to the future seven-year tribulation period.

Go Deeper Excursus 29: *Diverse Interpretations of the Male Son of Rev 12*

Excursus 29 demonstrates that though the interpretation of the male son in Revelation 12 as Christ alone is widely accepted in modern commentaries, much earlier interpretations understood the male son as a reference to a corporate body of saints.

To order the book, *The Fathers on the Future: A 2nd-Century Eschatology for the 21st-Century Church*, or to access the online excurses that supplement the chapters of the book, go to www.fathersonthefuture.com or scan the QR code below.

Chapter 21—Remembering the Future

Chapter 21 discusses the concept of death, resurrection, and eternal life from a classic Christian theological perspective. It emphasizes that death is an enemy, not a friend, and that resurrection and glorification as victory over death are central to Christian faith. The chapter explains that believers, upon death, join Christ in the heavenly realm of paradise where they await resurrection unto the full experience of eternal life in the renewed heavens and earth. It describes a continuous process of growth in glory and likeness to God rather than a sudden transformation into perfection. The idea of the beatific vision, where believers see God face to face in their resurrected state, is described in terms of eternal progressive glorification. The ultimate goal of future salvation is an eternal journey of continuous growth in knowledge of, love for, and relationship with God and with one another as we are all transformed from glory to glory forever.

