



Biblical Eschatology from Creation to Consummation in Christ and Its Implications for the Church

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ABSTRACT

This article examines biblical eschatology as a coherent theological metanarrative unfolding from creation to consummation in Christ, in whom all things hold together (Colossians 1:17). Eschatology is approached not as a speculative doctrine concerned primarily with future events, but as a present and ongoing reality grounded in the redemptive work and restorative reign of Christ. Through a qualitative theological methodology, employing canonical hermeneutics and lexical analysis of the term ἔσχατος, the study traces the eschatological trajectory of Scripture as it coheres around the person and work of Christ. This trajectory encompasses the original act of creation, its distortion through sin, the inauguration of restoration through the cross and resurrection, and its ultimate consummation in the new creation. Particular attention is given to Revelation 21, where the eschaton is depicted not merely as temporal finality but as the fulfillment of all things in Christ (παλιγγενεσία), thereby revealing the divine purpose to restore creation through Him. This eschatological vision carries significant implications for the life and identity of God's people as a whole. Those who are united in Christ are called to live in light of the inaugurated eschaton, embodying and enacting His restorative work in the world as a foretaste of the coming fullness. In this sense, the community of believers participates corporately in Christ's renewing mission, manifesting even now the reality of the new creation toward which all history moves. The article thus offers an integrative framework that unites doctrine and discipleship, hope and mission, situating the vocation of God's redeemed people within the telos of His redemptive purpose from creation to consummation in Christ.

Keywords: Christ's Restoration, Church, Consummation, Creation, Eschatology, Theological Metanarrative.

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INTRODUCTION

Biblical eschatology occupies a foundational place within Christian theology, not simply as a doctrine concerned with future events, but as a comprehensive theological metanarrative that orders the whole of redemptive history from creation to consummation in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ), who stands as both the *telos* (τέλος) and the divine agent of restoration (Felbar, 2024). This eschatological vision is grounded in the biblical testimony to God's covenantal faithfulness, which begins with the inherent goodness of creation (Genesis 1–2), is disrupted by human sin (חַטָּאָת - *ḥattā't*; ἁμαρτία - *hamartia*), and moves towards final restoration effected through the redemptive work of Christ (ἀπολύτρωσις, *apolytrōsis*), culminating in the renewal of all things (ἀποκατάστασις πάντων - *apokatastasis pantōn*; Acts 3:21) (N. T. Wright, 2020).

Far from functioning as a speculative or escapist concern, eschatology, when interpreted within the Christocentric trajectory of Scripture, operates as a theological lens through which the Church discerns its identity and vocation within the unfolding drama of redemption (Lioy, 2025). However, in many contemporary ecclesial contexts, eschatology has been marginalised or fragmented, often narrowed to debates over end-time chronologies such as premillennialism, postmillennialism, or amillennialism (Waddell & Althouse, 2012). While historically significant, such interpretive frameworks may nevertheless divert attention from the deeper biblical emphasis on Christ's restorative mission, through which creation is brought to its consummation in Him (Middleton, 2018).

Accordingly, this study seeks to recover eschatology as a discipline that is fundamentally Christocentric and restorative (Aleke, 2021). Theological voices, including that of Moltmann (2021) and Bauckham (2009) have consistently underscored the necessity of retrieving eschatological hope not as a remote utopia, but as a transformative reality inaugurated through Christ's resurrection and ongoing reign. The eschatological imagery of Revelation 21—most notably the Ἱερουσαλὴμ καινὴ (*Ierusalēm kainē*, “new Jerusalem”) and the γῆ καινὴ (*gē kainē*, “new earth”)—does not signify destruction but renewal, articulating the divine intention to bring history to its consummation in Christ, who declares, “Behold, I am making all things new” (Ἴδού καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα - *Idou kaina poiō panta*; Rev. 21:5) (Beale, 2011). These visions are not merely peripheral symbols, but constitute theological affirmations of Christ's active work of restoration within both history and eternity (Scully, 2012).

Accordingly, this article re-examines the theological significance of ἔσχατος (*eschatos*, “last”) in the biblical narrative. Using qualitative theological methodology—especially canonical hermeneutics and lexical analysis—the study shows how the *eschaton* is not merely the final chapter, but the climactic fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose in Christ (Vanhoozer, 2019). In this light, the anticipated παρουσία (*parousia*, “coming”) is inseparable from the Church's present calling to embody the reality of Christ's restorative work. Eschatological hope thus shapes not only doctrinal affirmation but ethical orientation, ecclesial identity, and missional clarity (Bird, 2013).

This study contributes to the renewal of eschatological theology by presenting biblical eschatology as both a theological framework and lived anticipation—centered on Christ’s restoration of all things. In this way, it presents a vision of the Church as a community shaped by, and bearing witness to, the divine work of restoration that extends from creation (תְּשׁוּבָה - *berē`šît*) to consummation (τελείωσις - *teleiōsis*) in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ), who is the Alpha and the Omega (Ἄλφα καὶ Ὠ; Rev. 22:13), the beginning and the end of God’s redemptive metanarrative.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative theological methodology that brings together canonical hermeneutics, lexical–theological analysis, and systematic theological reflection in order to examine biblical eschatology as a coherent metanarrative that finds its culmination in Christ. This approach affirms the unity of Scripture as a redemptive-historical narrative and interprets its theological movement from creation (תְּשׁוּבָה - *berē`šît*) to consummation (τέλος - *telos*) in the person and work of Jesus Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) (Gorman, 2019). Biblical eschatology is therefore investigated not merely as a doctrine concerned with future events, but as the theological lens through which the Church discerns its identity, mission, and hope (Bird, 2013).

The primary interpretive framework is informed by Seitz’s (2021) canonical hermeneutic, which emphasizes the final form of the biblical text and its theological coherence, particularly as this coherence finds its fulfillment in Christ. This framework is further enriched by Hans-Georg Gadamer’s concept of the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*), which enables the ancient text to engage meaningfully with contemporary contexts (Thiselton, 2020). Historical–grammatical exegesis is applied in the interpretation of key passages, while the canonical structure of Scripture guides the identification of intertextual themes that integrate protology and eschatology (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2024).

The study gives close attention to significant biblical terms such as *חַטָּאָה* (*ḥattā`t*), *ἁμαρτία* (*hamartia*), *ἀπολύτρωσις* (*apolytrōsis*), and *ἔσχατος* (*eschatos*), examined within their literary and theological contexts (Porter & Pitts, 2019). Texts such as Genesis 1–2, Romans 8:18–25, and Revelation 21–22 serve as focal points in tracing the movement from creation, through fall and redemption, to final consummation (Beale, 2011). Theological patterns are traced through canonical and typological analysis in order to disclose the unified movement of divine restoration.

Engagement with the theological literature is undertaken through a purposive review of major contributions to eschatology, with particular attention given to the works of Jürgen Moltmann and Richard Bauckham, whose reflections on hope, new creation, and the place of Revelation within systematic theology serve as critical dialogue partners for the biblical text (Bauckham, 2009; Moltmann, 2021; Woodbridge, 2010). These sources are analyzed not only for doctrinal clarity but also for their hermeneutical approaches and practical implications for the life of the Church (N. T. Wright, 2020).

Although the study does not engage empirical data, it remains closely attentive to the practical outworking of eschatological hope within ecclesial contexts (Root, 2022). Theological

interpretation is undertaken as a living dialogue between Scripture, tradition, and the contemporary Church, with the aim of recovering eschatology as a vision of renewal and restoration in Christ.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eschatology as a Comprehensive Theological Metanarrative: From Creation to the Parousia

This study demonstrates that biblical eschatology operates as a comprehensive metanarrative extending from creation to *παρουσία* (*parousia*). Far from constituting an isolated or exclusively future-oriented doctrine, eschatology emerges as an integral dimension of the biblical narrative, deeply embedded within the overarching structure of redemptive history (Russo, 2024). The Greek term *ἔσχατος* (*eschatos*), denoting “last” or “final,” signifies God’s sovereign purpose as it unfolds across the whole of the biblical narrative—from the initial act of creation, through humanity’s fall (*חַטָּאָה* - *ḥattā’ā*; *ἁμαρτία* - *hamartia*), to redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις* - *apolytrōsis*), and ultimately to the consummation portrayed in Revelation 21–22. Such a holistic perspective resists the reduction of eschatology to speculative end-times discourse and instead affirms its animating presence throughout Scripture (C. J. H. Wright, 2018).

An examination of texts from both the Old and New Testaments consistently underscores divine sovereignty and a purposeful direction within history. The titles attributed to God, such as “the First and the Last” (*רִשׁוֹן וְאַחֲרֹן* - *rishon ve’acharon*) in Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12, emphasize God’s consistent dealings with humans as well as authority and redemptive intent throughout history. This theological motif finds further resonance in the New Testament, where Christ is identified as the “Alpha and Omega” (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13), thereby underscoring the Trinitarian coherence and unity of God’s salvific purpose (Goldingay, 2010; Moo & Carson, 2019). Such imagery affirms that the divine initiative which inaugurated creation will likewise bring history to its intended consummation in Christ (Mang, 2023).

The theological trajectory of biblical eschatology may be articulated in four interrelated phases, with creation marking the inception of God’s purposeful order (Wenham, 2020), followed by the fall, which distorts that order through sin (Stott, 2019). Redemption is effected through Christ’s sacrificial death and resurrection (*ἀπολύτρωσις* - *apolytrōsis*), and the hope of *παρουσία* (*parousia*) looks towards the ultimate restoration of all things. Within this framework, the Church is understood both as the recipient of eschatological hope and as an active participant in God’s redemptive drama. At the same time, while such a schema offers conceptual clarity, it also carries the risk of oversimplifying the interpretive tensions and theological diversity that characterize the breadth of Christian tradition.

Divergent understandings of *παρουσία* illustrate this diversity vividly. Catholic sacramental theology underscores the communal and liturgical dimensions of hope, with particular emphasis on the Church’s ongoing participation in the kingdom of God. Eastern Orthodox theology, by contrast, foregrounds the mystical experience of *θεώσις* (*theosis*), framing

eschatology as participatory communion with the divine life and articulating a more cyclical understanding of time. Liberation theology, in turn, locates eschatological hope within concrete historical struggles for justice and liberation from structures of oppression (Gutiérrez, 2023; Ratzinger, 2019; Zizioulas, 2017). These diverse perspectives invite a deeper theological engagement that moves beyond dominant Western evangelical frameworks, thereby calling for a genuinely ecumenical and global conversation.

The hermeneutical approach adopted in this study is grounded in canonical and theological exegesis, with careful attention given to the interpretation of key terms such as ἔσχατος, παρουσία, and ἀπολύτρωσις within their respective scriptural contexts. At the same time, this method is unavoidably shaped by theological presuppositions rooted in Western traditions, which may have the effect of marginalizing alternative voices. Acknowledging this limitation creates space for the incorporation of insights drawn from liberation theology's concern for justice and solidarity, Eastern Orthodoxy's mystical theology, and Catholicism's ecclesiological and sacramental emphases. Engagement with these traditions both deepens the theological understanding of eschatology and extends its relevance across diverse contexts (Migliore, 2021).

From a practical perspective, the hope intrinsic to eschatology summons the Church to embody an active and faithful witness within the present world. Such witness is shaped by the tension of the “already, not yet” character of the kingdom of God, which calls the Church towards mission, evangelism, and sustained ethical engagement with social, ecological, and economic concerns. Faith communities are therefore encouraged to practice reconciliation, ecological stewardship, and advocacy for systemic justice as concrete expressions of God's coming reign. These practices function as anticipatory signs of the future restoration promised in Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:9) (Keller, 2019; N. T. Wright, 2020).

Ultimately, the person and work of Jesus Christ stand at the center any eschatological framework. Christ is not simply a participant within the divine economy but the decisive mediator who spans the distance between creation and consummation. As the incarnate Word, He embodies God's reconciling purpose towards creation, restoring what was fractured by sin through His sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Colossians 1:19–20). His lordship as the “Alpha and the Omega” further affirms that the restoration of all things is intrinsically bound to His person and redemptive mission (Revelation 22:13) (Bauckham, 2003; Piper, 2018).

No other figure or means is capable of effecting this cosmic renewal, for Jesus Christ alone is uniquely appointed by God as the sole Redeemer and the exclusive mediator of the new creation. In Him, the divine teleology inaugurated at creation reaches its ultimate fulfilment, as He secures victory over sin, death, and the powers of evil, thereby making possible the complete restoration of the cosmos (Hebrews 1:3; Acts 4:12). Therefore, eschatological hope is not abstract or detached but concretely centered on Christ's ongoing lordship and imminent παρουσία (*parousia*) (Bauckham, 2009).

Accordingly, the Church's participation in God's redemptive mission must be firmly grounded in faith in Christ as the singular means of salvation and cosmic renewal. Such an affirmation preserves the integrity of the biblical metanarrative and ensures that eschatological expectation remains anchored in the historic person of Jesus Christ, through whom God's purpose from beginning to consummation is revealed, enacted, and brought to completion (Migliore, 2021).

In summary, biblical eschatology, understood as a theological metanarrative, invites believers to adopt a broad and integrative vision. This vision is firmly grounded in Scripture and shaped by canonical coherence, while remaining attentive to ecumenical perspectives and contextual realities. By holding together creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, eschatology offers a theological lens through which the Church discerns its identity, vocation, and hope within the world.

To guard against theological reductionism, this vision must remain open to the richness and complexity of diverse Christian traditions and their distinctive contributions to understanding God's ultimate purposes in history and eternity. Ecumenical engagement in this regard deepens theological reflection and fosters practical responses that are both culturally attentive and spiritually faithful (N. T. Wright, 2012).

Accordingly, the theological drama of biblical eschatology is not confined to a distant future hope but constitutes a present reality that shapes the Church's mission, ethical life, and public witness. It summons believers to live in anticipation of God's final reign while faithfully participating in His ongoing redemptive work within the world.

The Continuity between Creation and Consummation: The Theological Significance of Ἔσχατος within the Biblical Metanarrative

This study advances findings that clarify both the continuity and the theological significance of the term ἔσχατος (*eschatos*) within the biblical metanarrative. Significantly, ἔσχατος is not to be construed as a detached or purely futurist concept, but as an element within an unfolding divine purpose that begins at creation and reaches its culmination in the consummation of history (N. T. Wright, 2008). The term, signifying “last” or “final,” discloses God's purposes, which orders the whole of history from its beginning to its end.

The foundational text of Genesis 1:1—“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ, *Berē šit bārā` ʿĒlōhîm ʿet haššāmayim wē ʿet hā ʾāreš*; LXX: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν, *En archēi epoiēsen ho Theos ton ouranon kai tēn gēn*)—establishes an inseparable connection between the origin of all things and their ultimate restoration in the eschaton. Further scriptural testimony underscores God's eternal sovereignty over the course of history. Isaiah 44:6 proclaims, “I am the first, and I am the last; besides me there is no god” (אֲנִי הָרִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי הָאַחֵר וְאֵין עִמָּי אֱלֹהִים - *Ani hāri šôn wa ʾani hā ʾahārôn*), while the book of Revelation identifies Jesus Christ as “the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end” (Rev. 1:8). Together, these affirmations testify to a coherent and unified divine purpose that extends across the entirety of biblical revelation (Barth, 2004; Goldingay, 2014).

The biblical narrative progresses through distinct yet interrelated phases: creation, fall, redemption, and eschatological consummation. The fall introduces a rupture, represented by the Hebrew *חַטָּאָת* (*ḥaṭṭā't*) and the Greek *ἁμαρτία* (*hamartia*), which is essential for comprehending the human condition. (Stott, 2019). Redemption, accomplished through Christ's *ἀπολύτρωσις* (*apolytrōsis*), represents the pivotal turning point in the history of salvation (Barth, 2004).

New Testament theology portrays Jesus Christ as the divine agent who inaugurates and consummates God's eschatological plan through incarnation, death, resurrection, and anticipated *παρουσία* (*parousia*) (Moo & Carson, 2019; Wenham, 2020). This confirms the continuity of salvation history centered on Christ.

Moreover, the Church is portrayed as an active participant in this divine metanarrative, tasked with embodying eschatological hope in the present age (Keller, 2019). This hope is not solely future-directed, but profoundly informs ethical conduct and social engagement within the "already, not yet" tension of God's kingdom (N. T. Wright, 2012). Accordingly, eschatology moves beyond abstract doctrinal formulation, demanding tangible and embodied expressions of redemptive hope within concrete contexts.

Practical manifestations of this embodiment are diverse and context-specific. Urban churches addressing economic inequality frequently establish microfinance programs or community cooperatives, thereby embodying a foretaste of eschatological restoration and justice. Similarly, churches that engage with fair-trade organizations and promote ethical employment initiatives enact a present testimony to the renewed creation, in which economic exploitation is abolished.

In rural settings impacted by environmental degradation, congregations engage in ecological stewardship—through tree planting, sustainable farming, and climate advocacy—thus living out the eschatological vision of reconciliation between humanity and creation (Romans 8:19–2). These practices are integral, not peripheral, to a biblical eschatology anticipating cosmic renewal (Revelation 21:5).

Reconciliation ministries offer a further illustration. Churches in post-conflict contexts that facilitate peace-building, dialogue, and forgiveness exemplify the eschatological trajectory from brokenness to healing. In South Africa, for instance, several congregations played pivotal roles in supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, thereby manifesting eschatological *shalom* within history.

Theologically, these initiatives are not merely social projects; they are rooted in the hope of *παρουσία* (*parousia*), a hope that does not remove the Church from history but rather sends it into history as an agent of transformation. Believers, as participants in the divine drama, anticipate the fullness of redemption by enacting signs of that future in the present. This anticipation transforms Christian vocation from passive expectation into active, prophetic witness.

These embodied practices demonstrate that eschatological faith neither denies the world nor withdraws from it, but actively seeks its transformation. They resonate with the Pauline image of the Church as *συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ* (*synergoi Theou*; 1 Corinthians 3:9)—"God's fellow workers"—

labouring within the unfolding narrative of God's redemptive purpose (Peterson, 2019). The vision of Christ as Alpha and Omega calls the church to hold together memory and hope, origin and destiny, with active fidelity in the present (Marshall, 2000).

Furthermore, the affirmation of eschatological continuity equips believers to resist despair in the face of suffering or systemic injustice. Anchored in the promise of consummation, the Church proclaims hope within contexts of war, displacement, and social fragmentation. In this way, eschatology functions both as a theological compass and an ethical summons, calling the faithful to enact in the present what God promises in the future.

Methodologically, this study utilizes linguistic and canonical analysis of key Hebrew and Greek terms, thereby enhancing the biblical interpretation of ἔσχατος and related concepts. At the same time, this conservative hermeneutical approach carries the risk of marginalising perspectives from liberation, feminist, and contextual theologies, which provide important insights regarding the social implications of eschatology (Stott, 2019; N. T. Wright, 2018).

Global Christianity presents a spectrum of eschatological perspectives: Latin American liberation theology highlights justice and emancipation in the here and now; Eastern Orthodox theology emphasises θεώσις (*theōsis*) as eschatological participation in divine likeness; and Catholic thought integrates eschatology with sacramental and ecclesial life, offering a foretaste of the kingdom. Collectively, these perspectives enrich the biblical metanarrative and serve as a safeguard against theological reductionism (Gutiérrez, 2023; Ratzinger, 2019; Zizioulas, 2017).

In conclusion, this study affirms the unifying function of biblical eschatology as a metanarrative linking creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. It invites both theological reflection and practical engagement, calling the Church to live visibly as God's future realized in the present. The continuity between creation and consummation demonstrates that ἔσχατος is not an isolated doctrine concerning the end, but a theological reality that redefines the beginning, the middle, and the goal of history. From the creation of heaven and earth to the final restoration in Christ, ἔσχατος remains the horizon of God's eternal purpose.

This understanding naturally prompts further reflection on how the eschaton is embodied throughout the biblical narrative—from the inception of creation to divine consummation—revealing God's sovereignty over history and humanity within His redemptive plan. Ultimately, Jesus Christ uniquely embodies this salvation history, actualising restoration and serving as the exclusive mediator who unites origin and eschatological fulfilment through His incarnation, atoning death, resurrection, and promised *παρουσία* (*parousia*). The Church's eschatological hope and vocation are thus fundamentally grounded in Him, who fulfils God's ultimate purpose for all creation in its entirety (Moo & Carson, 2019; Wenham, 2019).

The Eschaton in the Biblical Narrative: From the Inception of Creation to Divine Consummation

The concept of ἔσχατος (*eschatos*) within the biblical metanarrative carries profound theological significance, emphasizing a continuous divine plan that commences with Creation and reaches its fulfilment in consummation. This concept extends beyond a narrow

understanding of the “end times” to encompass the full scope of God’s sovereign activity, from the initial act of creation to the ultimate restoration of all things. The biblical texts consistently trace a coherent narrative thread linking the origin and the consummation of history within God’s overarching purpose (Pitre, 2021).

Genesis 1:1 asserts unequivocally, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ / *Bereshit bara Elohim et hashamayim ve’et ha’aretz*), a declaration rendered in the Septuagint as “*Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν*” (*En archē epoiēsen ho Theos ton ouranon kai tēn gēn*). This opening verse establishes God as the ultimate originator of all that exists, providing a theological framework within which the eschaton may be understood as the deliberate culmination of this divine creative activity (Beale, 2011).

The prophetic vision presented in Isaiah further elaborates this theme by envisaging a future reality described as “*a new heaven and a new earth*” (כִּי הִנֵּה אֲנִי בֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים וְאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה / *Ki hineh ani boreh shamayim chadash v’aretz chadashah*; Isaiah 65:17). This passage projects a divinely ordained transformation, extending the theological horizon established in the opening of Genesis and framing the ultimate renewal of creation within a prophetic and eschatological context. The Septuagint reflects this restoration as “*Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐποίησα καινοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν*” (*Egō gar epoiēsa kainous ouranous kai gēn kainēn*), emphasising God’s intentional re-creation rather than mere renovation. This theme of cosmic renewal recurs in Isaiah 66:22 and culminates in Revelation 21:1, where John’s apocalyptic vision affirms the promise of a transformed creation (Goldingay, 2010).

At the heart of this narrative lies the symbolism of the Garden of Eden (גַּן עֵדֶן - *Gan Eden*) in Genesis 2:8 and the “holy city” (ἡ πόλις ἡ ἅγια - *hē polis hē hagia*) depicted in Revelation 21:2. Both motifs signify the divine presence and the ideal communion between God and humanity, reflecting the original state of creation and its ultimate eschatological fulfilment. The correspondence between these images reinforces a teleological perspective in which the course of history is directed towards a consummation ordained by the divine will (Osborne, 2018).

This consummation is understood not merely as a temporal conclusion but as a holistic restoration of creation. The geographical particulars of Eden’s rivers (Genesis 2:11–13) function metaphorically to prefigure the resources and perfection of the eschatological city (Revelation 21:19–21). In this way, eschatology encompasses the physical, social, and spiritual renewal of the cosmos, emphasizing that the “end” simultaneously constitutes a “beginning” of perfected existence.

The theological concept ἔσχατος thus conveys the notion of “consummation” or “fulfillment”, denoting the point at which the divine plan attains its intended purpose. God, as Creator, remains the ultimate agent, bringing the cosmic narrative to completion and reversing the consequences of humanity’s fall into sin. This interplay between creation, fall, and consummation provides a comprehensive framework for interpreting the trajectory of salvation history (Allison Jr, 2013; N. T. Wright, 2020).

Sin, expressed as חַטָּאת (*hatta't*) in Hebrew and ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) in Greek, is depicted not merely as a spiritual deficiency but as a pervasive corruption that permeates every aspect of reality (Morris, 1994). The account in Genesis 3 portrays the disruption wrought by sin, extending its consequences across human relationships, social structures, the natural order, and spiritual fellowship with God (Beale, 2011; Everhart, 2022; Tabaczek, 2025). Such a comprehensive disruption calls for a correspondingly holistic redemptive response (Enns, 2019).

The twofold consequences of sin—manifested in both human depravity and the corruption of creation—are central to delineating the full scope of redemption (Calvin, 2018). The twofold consequences of sin—manifested in both human depravity and the corruption of creation—serve as a critical framework for understanding the full scope of redemption. Human moral failure results in estrangement from God and a disruption of communal harmony, while the created order itself undergoes decay and experiences suffering (Walton, 2020). This extensive effect highlights the cosmic dimensions inherent in eschatological hope.

The promise of redemption revealed by God, initially foreshadowed in Genesis 3:15, anticipates the ultimate triumph over sin and evil (Cheek, 2021). The act of providing garments for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21) further manifests God's commitment to restoration, even in the context of divine judgment (Kline, 2017). These initial acts of God introduce the theme of grace, which is developed progressively throughout the course of biblical history (Osborne, 2023).

Eschatological hope reaches its full expression in the New Testament, where the Apostle Paul describes the subjection of all things under Christ (1 Corinthians 15:28). This passage underscores that the consummation entails not merely the restoration of humanity but also the redemption of the entire created order. The lordship of Christ thus signifies the all-encompassing scope of God's redemptive plan.

Paul's theological reflection further affirms the liberation of creation, which "will be set free from its bondage to corruption" (Romans 8:21) (Moo, 2004). This liberation heralds a new creation in which suffering and decay are absent, thereby affirming God's intention to restore all dimensions of reality, rather than humanity alone.

The return of Christ marks the decisive moment in this divine plan (1 Corinthians 15:23–24). Christ's victory over "every rule and every authority and power" signifies the dismantling of evil's dominion and the transfer of the Kingdom to God the Father (Harris, 1996). This final event realizes the goal initiated at Creation, where justice and peace will reign supreme. The implications of this consummation extend beyond doctrinal formulation to practical faith. It calls upon believers to cultivate eschatological awareness, engaging actively in the ongoing work of God's redemption within the present world (N. T. Wright, 2012). Eschatology therefore functions as a compelling impetus for ethical conduct, the pursuit of social justice, and responsible stewardship of the natural environment.

This perspective calls the contemporary Church to undertake transformative action, embodying the hope of restoration across social, economic, and ecological spheres. Practical expressions of this engagement include advocating for the oppressed, nurturing the created

order, and promoting reconciliation within communities, all of which reflect the holistic character of biblical consummation.

In recognizing the limitations of hermeneutical approaches, it is essential to acknowledge that interpretations of ἔσχατος vary according to theological traditions and contexts. Differences in eschatological emphasis—whether futurist, realized, or inaugurated eschatology—reflect diverse hermeneutical frameworks, underscoring the necessity for careful, context-sensitive biblical exegesis (Moo & Carson, 2019).

Such diversity serves not to dilute the fundamental biblical message, but rather to deepen understanding, as it enables the faith community to engage critically with complex texts, thereby cultivating theological maturity. Scholars and practitioners must remain attentive to these methodological limits to prevent readings that are excessively deterministic or reductionist (Seitz, 2020).

In conclusion, the biblical concept of ἔσχατος serves as a theological bridge linking Creation with consummation. It reveals a God who is actively involved from beginning to end in a redemptive narrative that embraces all aspects of reality. This holistic eschatology challenges the Church to embody hope through faithful witness and active engagement in God's restorative mission, thereby realizing the divine plan in the present age.

Understanding the ἔσχατον (*eschaton*) as a theological narrative connecting Creation with divine consummation affirms that salvation history is not a sequence of random occurrences but a unified whole directed by God's omniscient and sovereign will. This perspective invites believers to approach Scripture as a coherent divine drama unfolding from start to finish, wherein eschatology transcends a mere notion of "end times" and instead represents the climax and ultimate aim of God's redemptive plan for creation. Consequently, eschatology provides the foundational framework for constructing a comprehensive theology that integrates doctrinal reflection, ethical practice, and ecclesial identity (N. T. Wright, 2020).

Furthermore, awareness of the theological dimension of the *eschaton* naturally carries profound ethical implications for contemporary Christian living. The eschatological hope directs the Church and its members towards a life marked by watchfulness, moral responsibility, and social engagement consistent with the values of the Kingdom of God that is already inaugurated, but not yet fully realized. Understanding that the promised future is not a mere abstraction but a call to active participation as agents of transformation, the Church is summoned to embody faith in action as part of the holistic journey of salvation history (Hauerwas & Willimon, 2019).

Recognizing this theological and ethical continuity, the study of biblical eschatology must be closely connected to a more detailed examination of its theological foundations, ethical ramifications, and the Church's role as the covenant community participating in God's salvific mission. Accordingly, the following discussion will examine how biblical eschatology operates not merely as a rigorous theological framework but also as a source of ethical impetus and practical directive for the Church in carrying out its mission in the contemporary world (Migliore, 2021).

This integration of theological foundations, linguistic analysis, and ecclesial implications demonstrates that the eschatological hope portrayed in Revelation 21 is not merely an abstract doctrine confined to the future, but a dynamic and transformative vision that shapes the Church's present identity and mission. Careful exegesis of terms such as *καινός* and *κοινωνία*, along with the biblical anticipation of the *παρουσία*, establishes a rigorous theological framework in which eschatology is intrinsically linked to both ecclesiology and ethics. As a redeemed community, the Church is called to manifest the character of the New Creation by actively embodying love, justice, and reconciliation in the contemporary world. In so doing, it becomes simultaneously a sign and an instrument of God's redemptive work within history, guided and assured by the certainty of what is yet to come (Yong, 2020).

Accordingly, the next stage in this theological inquiry involves a closer examination of the broader contours of Biblical Eschatology, encompassing its Theological Foundations, Ethical Implications, and the Church's Role in Salvation History. The following discussion will investigate how eschatological doctrines throughout Scripture—from the prophetic anticipations of the Old Testament to their Christological fulfillment in the New Testament—form a coherent theological narrative. It will further consider how these doctrines shape the Church's moral witness, pastoral practice, and engagement with the wider world, thereby connecting eschatological vision with the practical ecclesial vocation within the unfolding narrative of divine redemption (Torrance, 2019; N. T. Wright, 2018).

Biblical Eschatology: Theological Foundations, Ethical Implications, and the Church's Role in Salvation History

This study presents a holistic understanding of biblical eschatology by analyzing key scriptural texts and theological reflections spanning both the Old and New Testaments. The foundational question posed by Jesus' disciples in Matthew 24:3—"Tell us, when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"—reflects humanity's enduring curiosity and existential anticipation concerning the consummation of salvation history. This inquiry reveals the universal human concern about the timing and nature of eschatological fulfillment, underscoring the importance of interpreting end-time realities within the biblical metanarrative (N. T. Wright, 2018).

Within the Old Testament, the notion of the end times, articulated as *אַחֲרֵי־יְמֵי הַיָּמִים* (*Aharit Hayamim*), is closely intertwined with prophetic visions of divine justice, restoration, and cosmic renewal. The angelic message in Daniel 8:19 situates this eschatological vision within "the appointed time of the end," emphasizing that the culmination of history unfolds according to God's sovereign timetable. Prophetic texts consistently portray a tension between present suffering and future vindication, presenting the *eschaton* not merely as a terminal point, but as a decisive moment within the overarching framework of God's redemptive purposes.

The motif of the "Day of the Lord" (*יּוֹם יְהוָה* / *Yom Adonai*) is central to Old Testament eschatology, signifying a divine intervention characterized by judgment and the establishment of righteousness (Malachi 4:5) (Goldingay, 2010). This concept provides both historical and

theological grounding for the eschatological vision, connecting past salvific acts with the promise of future divine restoration. Closely associated with the Messiah, the “Day of the Lord” envisages the manifestation of God’s justice and the establishment of a renewed covenantal order, situating eschatology firmly within God’s ongoing relational engagement with His people.

In the New Testament, the return of Christ (*παρουσία* - *parousia*) is portrayed as the fulfillment of the promises foretold in the Old Testament. It represents the consummation of salvation history and the full realisation of God’s kingdom, wherein the created order is both restored and reconciled (Gorman, 2019). The incarnation marks the commencement of the eschatological age (Hebrews 1:1–2), representing a pivotal transformation within salvation history and foreshadowing the anticipated return of Christ. Within this context, Jesus’ teachings regarding the unpredictability of His coming (Matthew 24:42, 44; Mark 13:33–37) underscore the necessity for constant vigilance and moral preparedness, thereby establishing an enduring ethical responsibility for contemporary believers (Snyder, 2021).

Eschatological hope within the New Testament carries significant communal and ethical implications. The Church, understood as the body of Christ, is called to participate actively in God’s eschatological purposes, manifesting the values of the kingdom through justice, mercy, and mission (Keener, 2023). This hope serves to inspire social engagement and mutual support among believers, cultivating both resilience and a sense of shared accountability (Hebrews 10:24–25). In addition, believers are called to act as agents of transformation within their respective contexts, demonstrating the intrinsic connection between spiritual preparedness and the ethical demands of the kingdom (N. T. Wright, 2018).

The findings confirm that biblical eschatology operates as a comprehensive theological framework, intricately interweaving themes of hope, divine justice, communal responsibility, and ethical conduct. The continuity between Old Testament prophecy and its fulfillment in the New Testament presents a coherent narrative, in which eschatology is positioned as an integral component of salvation history rather than a peripheral or speculative doctrine (Osborne, 2023). This conclusion corresponds with contemporary scholarship, which highlights the “Day of the Lord” and the *parousia* as manifestations of God’s sovereign and redemptive purposes (Gorman, 2019).

The motif of watchfulness, which features prominently in Jesus’ teaching (Matthew 24:42, 44; Mark 13:33–37), reorients eschatology from a stance of passive anticipation towards active ethical engagement. This summons to vigilance cultivates a lived eschatology, wherein hope informs both daily conduct and the character of the community (Keener, 2023; Snyder, 2021). In this way, the Church’s eschatological consciousness is translated into a practical theology that underpins moral responsibility and faithful witness. This study, however, recognizes the hermeneutical challenges arising from the diversity of theological traditions—premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism—as well as the range of exegetical approaches, including historicist, futurist, and idealist perspectives. Such plurality necessitates scholarly humility and a willingness to engage in ongoing dialogue, framing biblical eschatology as a dynamic theological discourse rather than a fixed dogma (Osborne, 2023).

From a practical perspective, the research underscores the pivotal role of eschatological hope in energizing the Church's mission. Churches informed by such eschatological awareness frequently assume leadership in the pursuit of social justice, compassionate outreach, and holistic ministry, thereby actualizing the kingdom ethic within the present world (Gorman, 2009). Ministries that focus on poverty alleviation, reconciliation, and ecological stewardship exemplify the manner in which eschatological vision motivates transformative engagement within the community.

Furthermore, the anticipation of Christ's return undergirds spiritual resilience in the face of contemporary challenges, including secularization and moral relativism. In this regard, eschatology offers a stabilizing framework that nurtures perseverance, instills a sense of moral urgency, and promotes evangelistic commitment (N. T. Wright, 2018). The Church's dual function as both proclaimer and preparer guarantees continuous vigilance and active engagement in the mission of God's kingdom.

In conclusion, this study presents biblical eschatology as a theological perspective that is simultaneously future-oriented and actively engaged in the present. The return of Christ functions not merely as an eschatological event but as a catalyst for ethical transformation, communal responsibility, and practical ministry. Such a balanced perspective counters both fatalism and sensationalism, providing the Church with a robust theological foundation for faithful living and mission within an increasingly complex and changing world.

The Eschatological Hope of Revelation 21: Theological Foundations, Linguistic Insights, and Ecclesial Implications for the Present Age

The present study elucidates a theologically rich framework that underpins the eschatological hope within the Church, with particular attention to the depiction in Revelation 21. The analysis of the text highlights the employment of specific Greek terminology that conveys subtle and significant nuances concerning the nature of the New Heaven and New Earth. Notably, the term *καινός* (*kainos*), conventionally rendered as 'new,' carries a meaning that extends beyond mere novelty, as implied by *νέος* (*neos*). Rather than denoting something entirely unprecedented, *καινός* connotes a process of transformation and renewal within the existing creation, preserving the essential character of the original while effecting a radical change in its form. This linguistic precision accentuates a theological perspective according to which God's eschatological purpose is not one of annihilation, but of redemption and transformative restoration of creation (Beale, 2011).

Another significant finding concerns the depiction of the New Earth as a reality that is at once continuous with, yet distinct from, the present world, embodying a creation that has undergone profound transformation. Central to this eschatological hope is the descent of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, described as coming down from heaven and deriving directly from God (Revelation 21:2). The city is presented as the embodiment of holy *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*), representing a restored community characterized by intimate fellowship both with God and among believers. In this light, the Church transcends its merely institutional identity, being

envisaged as ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*)—a glorified organism destined to exist in full unity with the divine presence (Romans 8:30) (Osborne, 2018).

The eschatological narrative further underscores the presence of the Tabernacle of God among humanity (Revelation 21:3), signifying a climactic moment in the unfolding of redemptive history. Although God's presence was previously made manifest in the incarnation (John 1:14), this ultimate state of intimate communion will be fully realized at the παρουσία (*parousia*), the return of Christ. This divine presence represents the consummation of God's promise, characterized by the complete eradication of suffering and sorrow (Revelation 21:4), offering enduring hope to believers who face trials in the present age (Mounce, 2020).

The study further emphasizes the theological significance of God's creative activity in the *eschaton*, drawing a distinction between the concepts of בָּרָא (*bara*, *creation ex nihilo*) and אָשָׂא (*asah*, *making or fashioning*). In God's redemptive work, the focus is not on a creation *ex nihilo*, but on the transformative renewal of that which has been fractured by sin (Revelation 21:5). This renewal constitutes a higher state of existence, integrating both restoration and transformation within the created order (Keener, 2019).

The eschatological hope embraces not merely the physical renewal of creation, but also the spiritual restoration of relationships—between God and humanity, among human beings, and within all creation. This vision charges the Church with the task of embodying holy κοινωνία (*koinonia*), manifesting God's love and justice in the present as a foretaste of the eschatological reality to come (Hays, 2019).

Finally, the study indicates that the Church is called to a dual vocation: actively awaiting the return of Christ while simultaneously participating in God's restorative mission. Such participation entails bearing witness to Christ's redemptive work, nurturing a community characterized by love and justice, and responding to the suffering of the world through acts of compassionate engagement (Keller, 2019; N. T. Wright, 2012).

The findings of this study suggest that the eschatological hope associated with the New Heaven and New Earth, as depicted in Revelation 21, carries profound theological and practical implications for the identity and mission of the Church. The key insights underscore that the Church's hope is not a mere abstract anticipation of the future, but constitutes a transformative reality that shapes faith and practice in the present.

The text's employment of καινός (*kainos*) rather than νέος (*neos*) conveys a theological subtlety often overlooked in contemporary interpretations. This linguistic distinction resonates with classical Christian thought, which interprets God's eschatological activity as a renewal and restoration of creation rather than its annihilation. Previous scholarship corroborates this perspective, affirming that the continuity of God's creation lies at the heart of Christian hope (Beale, 2011).

The portrayal of the New Jerusalem as the locus of holy κοινωνία (*koinonia*) underscores the ecclesiological dimension of eschatology. The Church is thus not merely to wait passively but is called to actualize this divine fellowship in the present through its communal life and mission. This perspective resonates with Morris's observation that the

Church functions as a living organism, entrusted with reflecting God's character through its relationships and actions (Morris, 1994).

With regard to methodology, this study employed a hermeneutical approach grounded in the biblical exegesis of original Greek terms, combined with theological synthesis. Nonetheless, certain limitations are inherent in this approach, owing to the interpretive nature of biblical hermeneutics, which may produce divergent conclusions depending on underlying theological presuppositions. For example, varying perspectives on the character of eschatological transformation or the role of the Church can give rise to alternative readings of the same textual material (Beale, 2011). The subjective influence of denominational perspectives highlights the necessity for continued dialogue, aimed at deepening and enriching the interpretation of eschatological hope.

Furthermore, the implications of this study extend to contemporary ecclesial praxis. The eschatological vision calls the Church to embody hope in a tangible and active manner, fostering communities marked by justice, mercy, and love. Practical expressions of this vocation include social justice ministries, community outreach initiatives, and advocacy on behalf of the marginalized, all of which serve as concrete manifestations of the anticipated New Jerusalem (Keller, 2019). In an age characterized by skepticism and cultural upheaval, the Church's eschatological witness provides a counter-narrative of hope and restoration.

The digital context presents both challenges and opportunities. While technological advancements can foster spiritual indifference, they simultaneously offer unprecedented platforms for the Church to communicate eschatological hope in innovative and inclusive ways (Grudem, 2009). Social media, online worship, and digital discipleship offer means to engage with individuals who might otherwise remain disconnected from traditional faith communities.

Ultimately, this study highlights eschatological hope as a vital catalyst for Christian perseverance and mission. It affirms the necessity of proclaiming Jesus Christ as the sole Redeemer (John 14:6; Acts 4:11–12) and underscores the urgency of evangelistic engagement in light of the reality of eternal judgment (2 Peter 3:3–7). The Church's anticipation of the *παρουσία* (*parousia*) serves not only to sustain believers amid present trials, but also to prompt active participation in the work of God's Kingdom in the here and now.

Moreover, the eschatological hope presented in Revelation 21 illuminates the comprehensive scope of Christ's redemptive work, understood not merely as a past salvific act accomplished on the cross, but as an ongoing transformative process culminating in the restoration of all things. This consummation represents the divine fulfillment of God's covenant promises and the ultimate vindication of His justice and mercy. The narrative reaches its climax in the profound reality that God Himself dwells permanently with His people, eradicating every vestige of sin, death, and decay. Such an intimate divine presence constitutes the defining feature of the New Creation and marks the *eschaton* as the final chapter in the cosmic drama, wherein the fractured creation is fully reconciled and restored to its intended glory. This climactic vision simultaneously calls the Church to embody the tension of "already" and "not yet," living

empowered by the Spirit to bear witness to this anticipated reality while awaiting its complete manifestation (Mounce, 2020).

Finally, this eschatological vision functions as a profound source of hope and impetus for Christian praxis within a fractured world. It calls the Church to resist both despair and complacency in the face of present suffering, injustice, and cultural disintegration. By grounding its identity and mission in the certainty of Christ's restorative work, the Church becomes both a foretaste and a signpost of the coming Kingdom, embodying the principles of justice, peace, and love that will characterize the New Heaven and New Earth. In this manner, eschatological hope transcends mere futurism, shaping the Church's engagement with society, inspiring transformative action, and providing a compelling witness to a world yearning for redemption. The work of Christ's restoration thus not only defines Christian hope, but also empowers the Church to participate actively in God's unfolding redemptive history.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that biblical eschatology, understood as a theological metanarrative, provides a comprehensive and integrative vision of God's redemptive purpose, extending from creation to its ultimate consummation in Christ. By examining the term ἔσχατος (*eschatos*) within the wider canonical context, the research affirms that eschatology is far more than speculative futurism; it is a profound testimony to God's faithfulness and sovereign plan throughout the history of salvation. Key motifs of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration are interwoven systematically, offering a theological framework that highlights the ultimate aim of eschatology.

Central to this framework is the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ stands as the exclusive and definitive means of salvation (John 14:6), perfecting both humanity and creation. Through His redemptive work on the cross, the process of renewal is inaugurated, reaching its full and glorious fulfillment at the *παρουσία* (*parousia*), the eschatological return of Christ. This consummation encompasses not only the restoration of believers but also the renewal of the entire cosmos, fulfilling God's covenant promises and establishing the New Heaven and New Earth, as revealed in Revelation 21.

The findings further underscore that this eschatological hope actively shapes the Church's identity and mission. The Church is called to embody this hope through *κοινωνία* (*koinonia*), justice, reconciliation, and faithful witness in a fractured world. Firmly grounded in Christ's saving work and the anticipation of His return, the Church is not a passive recipient of future promise but an active participant in God's present restorative mission. Consequently, eschatology extends beyond doctrine to become a lived reality, transforming ecclesial life into a foretaste of the coming Kingdom.

The principal contribution of this study lies in demonstrating how eschatology integrates coherently with the biblical narrative as a whole and with the practical life of the contemporary Church. Christ-centered eschatology emerges as foundational for theology, ecclesiology, and pastoral practice, offering both clarity of purpose and motivation for faithful proclamation,

discipleship, and compassionate engagement with the world. Future research may fruitfully explore the relationship between eschatology and pressing contemporary concerns, including social justice, ecological renewal, and interfaith engagement, as well as empirical studies of how local churches embody eschatological hope in their ministry.

In conclusion, biblical eschatology, with Jesus Christ as the sole Redeemer and perfecter, constitutes not merely an academic inquiry, but a transformative force for the Church. By embracing and enacting the eschatological hope rooted in Christ's redemptive work and consummated at His *parousia*, the Church is empowered to bear witness faithfully to God's saving power and to participate actively in the restoration of all creation, serving as a prophetic signpost of the New Creation until that ultimate day.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Author contributions

Marde Christian Stenly Mawikere conceptualised and designed the study and drafted the manuscript. Marde Christian Stenly Mawikere also contributed to the biblical-theological analysis and the interpretation of eschatological themes from creation to consummation in Christ. Meanwhile, Sudiria Hura participated in the theological synthesis and critically revised the manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the article.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research. The study is based on biblical-theological library research and did not involve direct contact with human participants, animals, or environmental intervention. Therefore, ethical clearance from an ethics committee was not required.

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Data availability

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Disclaimer

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