



Comparative Eschatology of Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Traditions: A Structured Textual Study of End-Times Signs and Figures

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Abstract

Eschatological traditions in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism share recurring motifs of cosmic disruption, an adversary figure, an agent of final justice, resurrection, and divine judgment, yet these parallels are often asserted rather than tested against specified sources. This study compares how the signs and figures of the end times are presented in selected textual strands of the three traditions. It uses a comparative textual design informed by a structured literature search. Seventeen primary text units, including the Book of Daniel, the Book of Revelation, the Qur'an, and three Sunni hadith collections, were coded with a codebook into three analytical phases (preliminary signs; eschatological figures and battles; and resurrection, judgment, and afterlife) and eight motif categories. Corpus analysis finds parallels in all three phases, but their distribution is uneven. A deceiver figure is explicit in the Christian and Islamic units, whereas the Jewish adversaries are hostile rulers, and Armilus appears only in a seventh-century apocalypse. Sunni and Twelver Shi'i sources also present the Mahdi differently. A case study of Gog and Magog shows documented reworking from Ezekiel to Revelation and a plausible Late Antique background to Qur'an 18, although direct textual dependence cannot be demonstrated for most other motif pairs. The study contributes a transparent, source-level comparison that distinguishes textual parallels from claims of historical transmission. Practically, it offers educators and interfaith practitioners a verifiable reference for discussing shared and distinctive end-times beliefs without collapsing the internal diversity of each tradition.

Keywords: Abrahamic religions; apocalyptic literature; comparative eschatology; eschatological figures; signs of the end times



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INTRODUCTION

Many religious traditions imagine an end to history, a final reckoning in which divine justice is rendered (J. J. Collins, 2016; Walls, 2008). Such expectations are not confined to ancient texts. Survey and experimental research shows that end-times beliefs remain widespread in some contemporary societies and respond to social and psychological conditions (Diamant, 2022; Routledge et al., 2018). In the United States, for example, 39% of adults surveyed in 2022 said that humanity is living in the end times (Diamant, 2022). The present study, however, does not measure belief. Its problem lies in comparative theology: how the signs and figures of the end are presented in the textual sources of Islam, Christianity, and

Judaism, and how far their similarities can be explained.

Within the three Abrahamic traditions, eschatology is a central theological domain rather than a peripheral speculation. Each tradition, however, is internally diverse, and its sources differ in status. In Islam, the Qur'an affirms the coming of the Hour (*al-sa'a*), resurrection, and judgment, while the detailed narratives of the Dajjal, the descent of 'Isa (Jesus), the Mahdi, and Gog and Magog (*Yajuj wa Majuj*) come mainly from hadith collections and later compilations (D. Cook, 2002; Filiu, 2011). In Christianity, the main sources are the Book of Revelation, the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25), and Pauline and Johannine passages, which later interpreters combined into doctrines of the Second Coming, the Antichrist, and the Millennium (McGinn, 2000; Rowland, 2010). In Judaism, eschatological ideas are distributed across scripture (notably Ezekiel and Daniel), Second Temple apocalypses such as 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra, the sectarian texts of Qumran, rabbinic literature, and post-rabbinic apocalypses such as *Sefer Zerubbabel* (J. J. Collins, 2016; Reeves, 2005).

These sources were composed over more than a millennium, and their relationships must therefore be treated chronologically. Several key Jewish apocalyptic texts belong to the Second Temple period (516 BCE–70 CE). The Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36) probably dates from the third century BCE, the visions of Daniel 7–12 from the Maccabean crisis of about 167–164 BCE, and the Parables or Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) from around the turn of the era (Boccaccini, 2007; Nickelsburg, 2001; Nickelsburg & VanderKam, 2012). Fourth Ezra was written around 100 CE, after the destruction of the Temple (Stone, 1990), and the New Testament texts in the second half of the first century CE. The Qur'an belongs to the early seventh century, *Sefer Zerubbabel* also to the early seventh century, and the canonical Sunni hadith collections to the ninth century (Himmelfarb, 2017; Reeves, 2005). The date of composition must also be distinguished from the date of surviving manuscripts; Table 2 summarizes both for the corpus of this study. This chronology allows three processes to be distinguished: the documented Second Temple roots of certain motifs, their Christian reception, and the separate, often indirect, processes through which related motifs appear in Islamic sources (Shoemaker, 2018).

Intertextuality, as theorized by Kristeva (1980) and systematized by Genette (1997), describes how texts absorb and transform earlier texts. In comparative eschatology, however, the concept is often used loosely, so that any shared motif is taken as evidence of borrowing. This study therefore separates four types of relationship. A typological parallel is a shared motif or structure without evidence of contact. An allusion involves shared distinctive wording or a rare combination of elements. An explicit citation or reworking openly takes up an earlier text. A documented reception is a demonstrable use of an earlier text, supported by chronology and a plausible channel. Only the last two types justify claims of dependence, because shared motifs may also result from a common Late Antique or ancient Near Eastern background or from independent convergence (A. Y. Collins, 2001; Shoemaker, 2018).

Previous scholarship has examined eschatological motifs within one tradition, or between two traditions, in considerable depth. Table 1 summarizes eight closely related studies,

together with their subject, approach, main findings, and the limitations relevant to the present study.

Table 1. State of the Art: Closely Related Studies

Study	Subject	Approach	Main findings	Limitation for this study
McGinn (2000)	Antichrist legend	Historical survey of Christian sources, with notes on Jewish and Muslim parallels	Traces the development of the Antichrist from early Christian texts to the modern period	Centered on Christian tradition; parallels are not systematically coded
D. Cook (2002)	Early Muslim apocalyptic	Philological-historical study of hadith and early apocalyptic texts	Reconstructs the formation of Muslim apocalyptic themes in their Late Antique setting	Islamic sources only
Reeves (2005)	Post-rabbinic Jewish apocalypses	Annotated translations, including Sefer Zerubbabel	Makes later Jewish apocalyptic texts accessible and situates them in a Near Eastern context	Anthology; no cross-tradition comparison
J. J. Collins (2016)	Jewish apocalyptic literature	Genre analysis	Defines the apocalyptic genre and worldview from Daniel and 1 Enoch to early Christianity	Ends before the rise of Islam
Himmelfarb (2017)	Sefer Zerubbabel	Literary-historical study of one Jewish apocalypse	Reads the text, including the figure of Armilus, as a Jewish response to Christian Byzantine rule	Single text
Shoemaker (2018)	Imperial eschatology	Comparative historical analysis of Byzantine, Jewish, and early Islamic sources	Shows a shared Late Antique imperial eschatology across the three traditions	Focuses on political-imperial themes rather than a full motif inventory
Tesei (2023)	Syriac Alexander legend	Philological-historical analysis	Dates an earlier version to the sixth century and shows its role behind Christian and Muslim Alexander traditions	Single motif complex
Okan et al. (2026)	Mahdi, 'Isa, and al-Dajjal	Theological analysis of classical and contemporary Islamic debates	Distinguishes the broad acceptance of 'Isa's descent and the Dajjal from the contested status of the Mahdi	Islamic tradition only

Source: Authors' compilation (Waruwu et al., 2026).

As Table 1 shows, existing studies are tradition-specific, focused on a single figure or motif, or oriented toward political history. What remains less developed is a source-level comparison that codes the same motif categories across clearly specified texts from all three traditions and states, for each parallel, whether it is a typological resemblance or a documented textual relationship. This study addresses that specific need. Its contemporary relevance is treated as context rather than as an outcome: whether eschatological beliefs shape political

behavior in particular regions and groups is an empirical question that requires separate research.

The study is guided by four research questions. RQ1 asks what the structural components of the end-times narratives are in the selected sources of each tradition. RQ2 asks what the main convergences and divergences are in signs, figures, sequences, and concepts of judgment. RQ3 asks which of these convergences reflect documented textual relationships and which are better described as parallels. RQ4 asks how the selected scholarly literature represents the political uses of these eschatological motifs. To answer these questions, the study uses a three-phase analytical framework: proto-eschatology (preliminary signs), meso-eschatology (eschatological figures and battles), and final-eschatology (resurrection, judgment, and afterlife). These phases are the researchers' etic categories, not stages recognized by the traditions themselves. Theoretically, the study contributes a coding framework that makes cross-traditional comparison explicit and verifiable, and it separates claims of parallelism from claims of transmission. Practically, it gives educators and interfaith practitioners a source-referenced overview of shared and distinctive beliefs.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative comparative textual design informed by a structured literature search. PRISMA 2020 is a reporting guideline for systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021); it is neither a protocol for analyzing primary texts nor a standard of exegetical validity. The study therefore consists of two distinct modules, shown in Figure 1. Module A is a structured search of secondary literature that identified the scholarship used to date, contextualize, and interpret the primary texts. Module B is a close reading of primary texts using philological, historical, and comparative procedures. The unit of analysis in Module A is a scholarly publication; in Module B it is a primary text unit, defined as a text or a clearly bounded section of a text listed in Table 2.

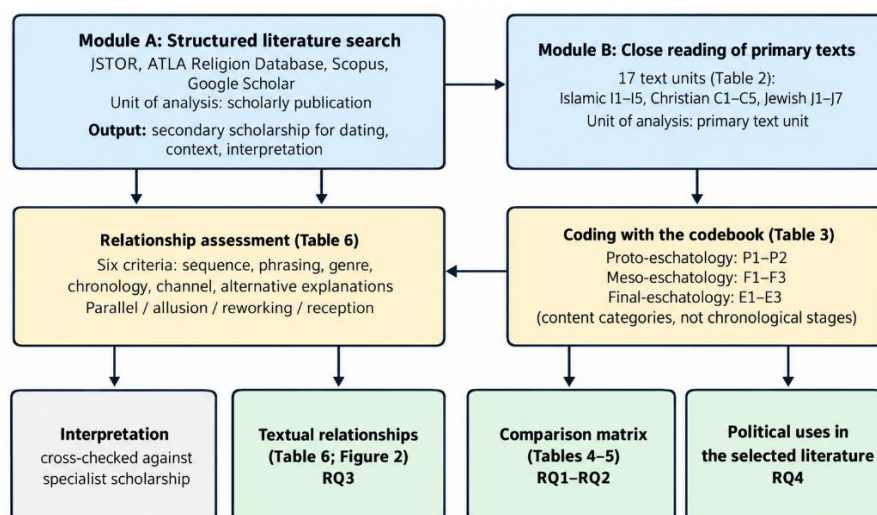


Figure 1. Research Design: Two Modules and the Three-Phase Coding Framework
Source: Authors' research design (Waruwu et al., 2026).

Module A searched JSTOR, the ATLA Religion Database, Scopus, and Google Scholar using combinations of the terms “eschatology,” “apocalyptic,” “end times,” “Abrahamic,” “comparative,” “Islamic,” “Christian,” and “Jewish,” together with the names of the figures and motifs studied (e.g., “Dajjal,” “Mahdi,” “Antichrist,” “Armilus,” and “Gog and Magog”). Publications were retained if they engaged with the primary texts of at least one tradition, appeared in peer-reviewed journals or with academic publishers, and offered analysis beyond description. Devotional literature without scholarly apparatus was excluded. Foundational works published before 2000 were retained when they remain standard references for a text or figure (e.g., Boyer, 1992; Russell, 1964; Sachedina, 1981), and the search was updated in 2026 to include recent studies. Because Module A served to select interpretive literature rather than to synthesize a body of evidence, it was not conducted or reported as a systematic review. All secondary works used are cited in the text and listed in the References.

Module B analyzed seventeen primary text units, selected according to three criteria: (a) the text treats at least one of the three phases at some length; (b) it is recognized as authoritative or influential by at least one community within the tradition; and (c) a scholarly edition or translation is available. Table 2 profiles each unit by tradition, normative status, genre, approximate date of composition, original language, and edition used. Sources are distinguished by level. For Islam, the Qur’an (scripture) is separated from the Sunni hadith collections (Sahih Muslim, Sahih al-Bukhari, and Sunan Abi Dawud) and from the compilation of Ibn Kathir, which is treated as classical commentary rather than as a primary source of equal status. Twelver Shi’i hadith collections were not coded directly; Shi’i positions are discussed through specialist literature (Amanat, 2009; Sachedina, 1981). For Christianity, the units are New Testament texts. The Book of Daniel is coded once, as Jewish scripture, and its Christian reception is analyzed through the New Testament texts that use it. Patristic and later readings are treated as history of interpretation, not as primary data. For Judaism, the corpus distinguishes Hebrew Bible texts (Ezekiel and Daniel), Second Temple pseudepigrapha (1 Enoch and 4 Ezra), Qumran sectarian texts (1QM and 1QS), rabbinic literature (selected passages of the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud), and a post-rabbinic apocalypse (Sefer Zerubbabel). These layers are compared because each represents a distinct stage in the development of Jewish eschatological thought, not because they share the same normative status.

Several authoritative sources were excluded to keep the corpus comparable across traditions. The tafsir of al-Tabari and other exegetical works were not coded, because the study compares scripture and hadith with a single representative classical compilation. Second Baruch was excluded because its eschatological scheme closely parallels that of 4 Ezra, which already represents post-70 Jewish apocalyptic (Henze, 2011). Other rabbinic and midrashic texts were consulted only where specialist literature discusses them. These boundaries mean that the findings describe the selected textual strands, not each tradition as a whole.

Table 2. Corpus Profile: Primary Text Units by Status, Genre, Date, and Edition

Code	Text unit (passages coded)	Tradition and status	Genre	Composition (approx.)	Language; edition used
I1	Qur'an (Q 4:159; 15:85; 18:47, 83–102; 19:71; 21:47, 96; 22:7; 27:82; 36:51; 39:68; 43:61; 44:10; 47:15, 18; 56:1–56; 75:1–15; 81:1–2; 101:6–9)	Islamic; scripture	Revealed recitation	610–632 CE	Arabic; Abdel Haleem (2004)
I2	Sahih Muslim, nos. 8, 155, 156, 169, 183, 2671, 2897, 2901, 2937	Sunni; canonical hadith	Hadith reports	Compiled 9th c. CE	Arabic; trans. Siddiqui (Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, 1971–1975)
I3	Sahih al-Bukhari, nos. 50, 80, 1036, 2059, 2222, 3439, 3448, 7131, 7439	Sunni; canonical hadith	Hadith reports	Compiled 9th c. CE	Arabic; trans. Khan (al-Bukhari, 1997)
I4	Sunan Abi Dawud, Kitab al-Mahdi, nos. 4282–4285	Sunni; hadith collection	Hadith reports	Compiled 9th c. CE	Arabic; trans. Qadhi and al-Khattab (Abu Dawud, 2008)
I5	Ibn Kathir, <i>al-Nihaya fi al-fitan wa al-malahim</i>	Sunni; classical compilation and commentary	Compilation	14th c. CE	Arabic; English selection (Ibn Kathir, 1991)
C1	Matthew 24–25	Christian; New Testament	Gospel discourse	c. 80–90 CE	Greek; NRSV (Coogan, 2010)
C2	1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11	Christian; New Testament	Letter	c. 50 CE	Greek; NRSV
C3	2 Thessalonians 2:1–12	Christian; New Testament (authorship debated)	Letter	1st c. CE	Greek; NRSV
C4	1 John 2:18–22; 4:3; 2 John 7	Christian; New Testament	Letters	c. 90–110 CE	Greek; NRSV
C5	Revelation	Christian; New Testament	Apocalypse	c. 95 CE	Greek; NRSV
J1	Daniel 7–12	Jewish; Hebrew Bible (also in the Christian canon)	Apocalypse	c. 167–164 BCE	Hebrew and Aramaic; NJPS (Jewish Publication Society, 1985)
J2	Ezekiel 38–39	Jewish; Hebrew Bible	Prophecy	6th c. BCE (later redaction possible)	Hebrew; NJPS
J3	1 Enoch 1–36 (Book of Watchers); 37–71 (Parables)	Jewish; Second Temple pseudepigrapha	Apocalypse	3rd c. BCE; late 1st c. BCE–1st c. CE	Ge'ez, with Aramaic fragments for 1–36; Nickelsburg and VanderKam (2004)

Code	Text unit (passages coded)	Tradition and status	Genre	Composition (approx.)	Language; edition used
J4	4 Ezra (2 Esdras 3–14)	Jewish; pseudepigrapha (post-70)	Apocalypse	c. 100 CE	Latin and other versions; NRSV
J5	War Scroll (1QM); Community Rule (1QS)	Jewish; Qumran sectarian texts	War text; rule	2nd–1st c. BCE	Hebrew; García Martínez and Tigchelaar (1997–1998)
J6	Sefer Zerubbabel	Jewish; post-rabbinic apocalypse	Apocalypse	Early 7th c. CE	Hebrew; Reeves (2005)
J7	m. Sanhedrin 10:1; m. Sotah 9:15; b. Berakhot 34b; b. Sanhedrin 97a–99a	Jewish; rabbinic literature	Legal and haggadic literature	c. 200 CE (Mishnah); c. 6th c. CE (Talmud)	Hebrew and Aramaic; Danby (1933); Epstein (1935–1948)

Source: Authors' compilation (Waruwu et al., 2026), based on J. J. Collins (2016), Nickelsburg and VanderKam (2012), Reeves (2005), Stone (1990), and VanderKam and Flint (2002).

The dates in Table 2 are approximate scholarly estimates of composition and should be distinguished from the surviving witnesses, which are often much later. Fragments of Daniel and Aramaic fragments of most sections of 1 Enoch were found at Qumran, but the Parables are absent there and the complete text of 1 Enoch survives only in Ge'ez manuscripts. The Semitic original of 4 Ezra is lost, and Sefer Zerubbabel is preserved in medieval manuscripts (Nickelsburg & VanderKam, 2012; Reeves, 2005; Stone, 1990; VanderKam & Flint, 2002).

Because the corpus spans Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Ge'ez, and Latin, the analysis relied on the scholarly translations listed in Table 2 and did not include an independent original-language analysis. Where a key term has a distinct semantic range, it is given in transliteration, for example *qiyama* (Arabic, rising or resurrection), *anastasis* (Greek, resurrection), and *tehiyyat ha-metim* (Hebrew, revival of the dead), so that these terms are not collapsed into a single English gloss. Arabic terms follow a simplified IJMES system and Hebrew terms the general-purpose style of the Society of Biblical Literature. Technical terms are italicized, whereas the names of figures, such as Dajjal, Mahdi, 'Isa, and Armilus, are not. Hadith numbers follow the numbering of Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi for Sahih Muslim and the standard numbering of the Darussalam editions for al-Bukhari and Abu Dawud.

Each text unit was coded with the codebook in Table 3. The three phases are analytical categories created by the researchers; they are not claimed to correspond to emic categories or to an identical temporal sequence in each corpus. Coding therefore classified content, not order. A passage was assigned to a category on the basis of what it describes, and narrative sequence was recorded only where the text itself states an order. When a text unit contained no material for a category, the cell was coded "N/A." Coding was carried out by one researcher. Each coded entry in Table 5 is linked to the passage or hadith number on which it is based, so that every coding decision can be checked against the source.

Table 3. Codebook: Phases, Categories, Operational Definitions, and Coding Rules

Phase	Category (code)	Operational definition	Coding rule
Proto-eschatology	Moral and social signs (P1)	Moral, social, or religious decline presented as indicating the approach of the end	Code only when the text links the phenomenon to the end; general moral exhortation is not coded
Proto-eschatology	Cosmic disruption (P2)	Disturbance of the natural or cosmic order (sun, moon, stars, earth, smoke) linked to the end	Code visionary and literal descriptions alike; record a sequence only where the text states one
Meso-eschatology	Adversary figure (F1)	A personal or collective figure opposing God's purposes in the end-time	Record attributes separately (deception, tyranny, false claims); code "deceiver" only when deception is explicit
Meso-eschatology	Messianic or redeemer figure (F2)	An agent through whom God brings final justice or deliverance	Distinguish human, heavenly, and divine figures as the text presents them
Meso-eschatology	Final battle (F3)	A decisive conflict between the forces of God and their opponents	Code named battles and locations where given
Final-eschatology	Resurrection (E1)	The raising of the dead	Note whether the resurrection is general or limited to a group
Final-eschatology	Judgment (E2)	Divine assessment of deeds or persons	Record the means of judgment (scale, books, throne) as stated
Final-eschatology	Afterlife (E3)	Final states of reward or punishment	Record the terms used in the edition (e.g., <i>Jannah</i> , <i>Gehinnom</i> , New Jerusalem)

Source: Authors' codebook (Waruwu et al., 2026).

To assess relationships between texts (RQ3), each selected pair was examined against six criteria: (1) shared motif sequence; (2) shared phrasing or a rare combination of elements; (3) genre; (4) chronology; (5) a plausible channel of transmission; and (6) available alternative explanations, such as a common background or independent convergence. Each pair was then classified as a typological parallel, an allusion, an explicit reworking, or a documented reception, with a confidence level (high, moderate, or low) based on the criteria met and on the assessments of specialist scholarship. Interpretations were cross-checked against specialist literature for each text, and divergent scholarly readings are reported where they affect the coding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are organized by research question. RQ1 is answered in the first three subsections, RQ2 in the fourth, RQ3 in the fifth, and RQ4 in the sixth. The final subsection discusses the methodological implications of the framework.

RQ1: Structural Components of the Islamic Sources

Corpus analysis finds that the Islamic sources show a clear division of labor between levels of text. The Qur'an (I1) affirms the certainty of the Hour (Q 15:85; 22:7), resurrection

(Q 36:51; 75:1–15), and judgment by the scale (Q 21:47; 101:6–9). It also names some elements later counted among the signs, such as the beast (Q 27:82), the smoke (Q 44:10), and Gog and Magog (Q 18:94–99; 21:96). It does not, however, name the Dajjal or the Mahdi, and it does not set out a sequence of signs. The narrative sequence comes from hadith (I2–I4), and its systematization into a single ordered account comes from later compilations such as that of Ibn Kathir (I5). Table 4 pairs each element with its source level, showing where the Qur'an, hadith, and classical compilation agree and where an element rests on hadith or commentary alone.

Table 4. Islamic Eschatological Elements by Source Level: Qur'an, Hadith, and Classical Compilation

Element	Qur'an (I1)	Hadith (I2–I4)	Classical compilation (I5)	Status and variation
Certainty of the Hour	Q 15:85; 22:7	Presupposed throughout	Presupposed	Shared foundation of all levels
Minor signs (<i>ashrat al-sa'a al-sughra</i>)	Signs mentioned generally (Q 47:18)	Tall buildings (Muslim 8; Bukhari 50); loss of knowledge (Bukhari 80; Muslim 2671); frequent earthquakes and time passing quickly (Bukhari 1036); indifference to lawful wealth (Bukhari 2059)	Gathered into lists	Content derives from hadith
Major signs (<i>al-sa'a al-kubra</i>)	Beast (Q 27:82); smoke (Q 44:10, interpretation debated)	Muslim 2901: smoke, Dajjal, beast, sun rising from the west, descent of 'Isa, Gog and Magog, three landslides (<i>khusuf</i>), fire from Yemen	Arranged into one sequence	Muslim 2901 lists ten signs without the Mahdi and without a strict order
Dajjal	Not named	One-eyed (Bukhari 7131); blind in the right eye (Bukhari 3439; Muslim 169); forty days, killed at the gate of Ludd (Muslim 2937)	Combined into one narrative	Hadith-based
Descent of 'Isa	Q 4:159; 43:61 (read as eschatological in some exegesis)	Breaks the cross, kills swine, abolishes <i>jizya</i> (Muslim 155; Bukhari 2222, 3448); descends east of Damascus and kills the Dajjal (Muslim 2937); declines to lead the prayer of "their amir" (Muslim 156)	Integrated with the Dajjal narrative	Qur'anic basis is interpretive; details are hadith-based
Mahdi	Not mentioned	Not named in Bukhari or Muslim; from the Prophet's family and the descendants of Fatimah, fills the earth with justice (Abu Dawud 4282–4285)	Discussed among the signs	Contested in Sunni theology; central in Twelver Shi'ism
Gog and Magog (<i>Yajuj wa Majuj</i>)	Q 18:94–99; 21:96	Released and then destroyed (Muslim 2901, 2937)	Combined with the barrier narrative	Attested at both levels
Trumpet and resurrection	Q 36:51; 39:68	N/A	Trumpet attributed to the angel Israfil	Israfil is not named in the Qur'an
Scale and bridge	Scale (Q 21:47; 101:6–9); passing over Hell (Q 19:71, interpretive)	Bridge (<i>jisr</i>) laid over Hell (Bukhari 7439; Muslim 183)	Termed <i>sirat</i>	The coded hadith use <i>jisr</i> ; <i>sirat</i> is the later term
Paradise and Hell	Q 47:15; 56:10–56	Numerous reports	Systematized	Shared across levels

Source: Authors' analysis (Waruwu et al., 2026) of the editions listed in Table 2.

At the proto-eschatological level, the hadith distinguish minor signs (*ashrat al-sa'a al-sughra*) from major signs (*al-kubra*). The minor signs in the coded reports are moral and social: destitute herdsmen competing in constructing tall buildings (Muslim 8; Bukhari 50), the taking away of knowledge and the spread of ignorance (Bukhari 80; Muslim 2671), frequent earthquakes and the rapid passing of time (Bukhari 1036), and indifference to whether wealth is lawfully gained (Bukhari 2059). The major signs are listed in the report of Hudhayfa ibn Asid (Muslim 2901): smoke, the Dajjal, the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of 'Isa, Gog and Magog, three landslides (*khusuf*) in the east, the west, and Arabia, and a fire from Yemen that drives people to their place of gathering. This list does not include the Mahdi, and it does not present the signs in a strict order. The familiar account of a continuous sequence, in which the Mahdi appears and is followed by the Dajjal, 'Isa, and Gog and Magog, is therefore a harmonization of several reports, such as Muslim 2937 and Abu Dawud 4282–4285, undertaken in later compilations (D. Cook, 2002; Ibn Kathir, 1991).

At the meso-eschatological level, the coded hadith portray the Dajjal as one-eyed (Bukhari 7131) and blind in the right eye (Bukhari 3439; Muslim 169). He remains on earth for forty days, of which one day is like a year, one like a month, and one like a week (Muslim 2937). In the same report, 'Isa descends near the white minaret east of Damascus and kills the Dajjal at the gate of Ludd, after which Gog and Magog are released and later destroyed. Other reports state that 'Isa will break the cross, kill the swine, and abolish the *jizya* (Muslim 155; Bukhari 2222, 3448). Within this corpus, 'Isa's return confirms rather than replaces the prophetic order of Islam: in Muslim 156 he declines to lead the prayer when invited by the community's leader (Okan et al., 2026; Saritoprak, 2003). The final-eschatological elements, namely the trumpet, resurrection, gathering, scale, bridge, Paradise, and Hell, are attested at both the Qur'anic and the hadith levels (Table 4).

The Mahdi illustrates the importance of distinguishing traditions within Islam. In the Sunni corpus coded here, the Mahdi is not named in Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim. He appears in Sunan Abi Dawud as a man from the Prophet's family and from the descendants of Fatimah who will fill the earth with justice (Abu Dawud 4282–4285). The identification of the unnamed leader in Muslim 156 with the Mahdi belongs to later interpretation rather than to the hadith itself. Recent theological scholarship notes that Sunni authors broadly affirm 'Isa's descent and the Dajjal, whereas the status of the Mahdi remains more contested because the relevant reports are graded differently (Okan et al., 2026). In Twelver Shi'ism, by contrast, the Mahdi is identified with the Twelfth Imam, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, whose occultation (*ghayba*) began in 874 CE and who is awaited as the one who will fill the earth with justice (Amanat, 2009; Sachedina, 1981). These two conceptions are distinct doctrinal positions rather than variants of a single Islamic figure, and the present corpus, being Sunni, documents only the first directly. Their political uses in particular historical settings are discussed under RQ4.

RQ1: Structural Components of the Christian Sources

Corpus analysis finds that the Christian sources share a Christological orientation: the person and return of Jesus Christ constitute the axis around which the other end-time events are arranged. The units nevertheless differ in genre and emphasis. Three kinds of data are therefore separated below: what the biblical texts state, how later interpreters harmonized them, and which communities hold particular readings.

At the proto-eschatological level, the Olivet Discourse (C1) warns of false messiahs, wars, famines, and earthquakes as “the beginning of the birth pangs” (Matthew 24:5–8), of increasing lawlessness (Matthew 24:10–12), and of cosmic signs in which the sun and moon are darkened (Matthew 24:29). Revelation (C5), usually dated to about 95 CE (Aune, 1997), presents its disruptions through the series of seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls (Revelation 6; 8–9; 16). A futurist, literal-theological reading takes these series as a linear sequence of future events. Interpreters since Victorinus of Pettau have instead read them as recapitulating, that is, as repeated presentations of the same judgment from different angles, and many modern commentators emphasize their symbolic and literary structure (Bauckham, 1993; Koester, 2014). The coding therefore records the series as content in category P2 without assigning them a fixed order.

At the meso-eschatological level, the term *antichristos* occurs only in the Johannine letters, where it refers to many “antichrists” who deny that Jesus is the Christ and are already present (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). Second Thessalonians speaks instead of “the lawless one,” who exalts himself above every so-called god and is accompanied by deceptive signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 9–10). Revelation describes two beasts, one from the sea and one from the earth, the second of which deceives the inhabitants of the earth (Revelation 13:1–18), but it never calls either of them the Antichrist. The single figure of “the Antichrist” is therefore a later harmonization of distinct texts, developed by early Christian writers such as Irenaeus and elaborated throughout the Middle Ages (McGinn, 2000). The coding keeps the texts separate: deception is explicit in 2 Thessalonians and Revelation 13, whereas the Johannine antichrists are false teachers rather than an end-time ruler. The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14) and the gathering for battle at Armageddon (Revelation 16:14–16) complete the meso-eschatological material, and the final confrontation is narrated in Revelation 19:11–21 and 20:7–10.

At the final-eschatological level, Paul describes the Lord’s descent with the archangel’s call and the trumpet of God, followed by the resurrection of “the dead in Christ” and the gathering of the living (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Matthew 25:31–46 depicts the separation of the nations, and Revelation 20:11–15 and 21:1–4 describe the judgment before the great white throne and the new heaven and new earth. Revelation 20:1–6 also mentions a thousand-year reign, which has been interpreted in three main ways. Premillennialism expects Christ to return before a literal earthly millennium; postmillennialism expects Christ to return after a period in which the gospel has transformed the world; and amillennialism reads the thousand years as a symbolic description of the present age. These positions are presented by their proponents in

Bock (1999), with premillennialism argued by Blaising, postmillennialism by Gentry, and amillennialism by Strimple. They are schemes for interpreting Revelation 20, not descriptions of denominations, and each is held in varied forms across communities.

One premillennial scheme, dispensationalism, was systematized in the nineteenth century by John Nelson Darby, spread through the Scofield Reference Bible, and popularized by twentieth-century fiction. It introduced a pre-tribulation rapture of believers that is not explicitly stated in Revelation (Weber, 2004). Its influence can be documented rather than assumed. A 2022 survey of 10,156 U.S. adults found that 20% held a premillennial view, rising to 44% among evangelical Protestants (Diamant, 2022), and a survey of evangelicals found that support for the State of Israel was associated with beliefs about biblical prophecy (Inbari et al., 2021). Its reach is also uneven: Nel (2023) shows how Pentecostal communities adopted dispensationalist teaching and argues that this shifted their theological priorities. The findings on dispensationalism therefore describe a specific strand of Christian eschatology, chiefly within evangelical Protestantism in the United States, not the views of all Christian communities.

RQ1: Structural Components of the Jewish Sources

Corpus analysis finds that Jewish eschatology in the selected sources is not a single system but a sequence of distinct layers, each with its own genre and setting. Prophetic scripture provides the earliest material: Ezekiel 38–39 describes Gog of the land of Magog leading a coalition of nations against Israel and being defeated by God (Lee, 2017). Second Temple apocalypses, Qumran sectarian texts, rabbinic literature, and post-rabbinic apocalypses then develop these themes in different directions (J. J. Collins, 2016; Russell, 1964). The analysis below follows this periodization.

The Book of Daniel (J1) requires separate treatment because it belongs to both Jewish and Christian scripture. Daniel 7, composed in its final form during the Maccabean crisis, presents four beasts representing successive kingdoms, a hostile “little horn” (Daniel 7:8, 24–25), the Ancient of Days enthroned in judgment with books opened (Daniel 7:9–10), and “one like a human being,” literally “like a son of man,” who receives everlasting dominion (Daniel 7:13–14). Daniel 12:2 is the clearest Hebrew Bible statement of resurrection, although it envisages the raising of “many” rather than of all. After the Second Temple period, Daniel was received differently in the two traditions. New Testament texts apply its son-of-man imagery to Jesus (Matthew 24:30), whereas rabbinic tradition placed Daniel among the Writings rather than the Prophets and warned against calculating the end (b. Sanhedrin 97b; J. J. Collins, 2016).

Among the Second Temple pseudepigrapha, the Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36) narrates the descent of the Watchers, fallen angels whose corruption of humanity leads to divine judgment (Nickelsburg, 2001). The Parables (1 Enoch 37–71), a separate and later composition, develop a heavenly figure called the Chosen One and the Son of Man, who sits on the throne of glory and judges the kings and the mighty (1 Enoch 46–48; 62). Their dating and the relationship of this figure to the Son of Man sayings of the Gospels remain debated (Boccaccini,

2007; Nickelsburg & VanderKam, 2012). Fourth Ezra (J4), written after 70 CE, lists signs of the end (4 Ezra 5:1–13), expects a messiah who will reign for four hundred years and then die (4 Ezra 7:28–29), and describes a return to primordial silence before the resurrection and judgment (4 Ezra 7:30–44; Stone, 1990). The Qumran texts (J5) represent a sectarian community. The War Scroll describes a final war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, the latter led by Belial (1QM 1), and the Community Rule presents the community as living in expectation of the final visitation (1QS 3–4; Schiffman, 2010; VanderKam & Flint, 2002).

Rabbinic literature (J7) treats eschatology mainly in legal and homiletical contexts. The Mishnah affirms that all Israel has a share in the World to Come (*'olam ha-ba*) and counts denial of the resurrection of the dead among the beliefs that forfeit it (m. Sanhedrin 10:1). It also describes the moral decline that will mark “the footsteps of the Messiah” (m. Sotah 9:15). The Babylonian Talmud gathers varied and partly conflicting traditions about the messianic age, including warnings against calculating the end (b. Sanhedrin 97b), and records the view that the messianic age will differ from the present only in Israel’s freedom from subjugation to the nations (b. Berakhot 34b). In these sources the Messiah (*mashiach*) is primarily a human king of the Davidic line (Fredriksen, 2000). The figure of Armilus does not appear in the Mishnah or the Talmud. He is attested in post-rabbinic apocalyptic texts, above all Sefer Zerubbabel (J6), an early seventh-century work in which Armilus is a hostile ruler who opposes the messianic figures before being defeated (Reeves, 2005). Himmelfarb (2017) reads the text as a Jewish response to the Christian Byzantine Empire, and Shoemaker (2018) situates its Armilus figure within the imperial eschatology shared by Byzantine, Jewish, and early Islamic sources. Armilus is therefore a motif of specific later Jewish traditions rather than a normative “Jewish Antichrist.”

At the final-eschatological level, resurrection appears in Daniel 12:2, 1 Enoch 51:1, 4 Ezra 7:32, and m. Sanhedrin 10:1. Conceptions of the afterlife range from Sheol in earlier biblical texts to the paradise and furnace of Gehenna in 4 Ezra 7:36 and the rabbinic *'olam ha-ba* (Segal, 2004). Jewish eschatology in these sources thus combines a national-restorative dimension, focused on the redemption of Israel, with cosmic and universal elements that are stronger in the apocalyptic layers.

RQ2: Convergences and Divergences Across Traditions

Table 5 compares the coded material across the three traditions. Each cell lists the text units and passages on which the coding is based, and “N/A” marks the units that contain no material for a category. The classical compilation (I5) is profiled in Table 4 and is not coded separately in this matrix.

Table 5. Motif Comparison Matrix with Coded References by Text Unit

Category	Islamic units (I1–I4)	Christian units (C1–C5)	Jewish units (J1–J7)
P1 Moral and social signs	I1: signs mentioned generally (Q 47:18). I2: tall buildings (8); loss of knowledge (2671). I3: 50, 80, 1036, 2059. I4: N/A	C1: lawlessness, love growing cold (Matt 24:10–12). C3: rebellion before the end (2 Thess 2:3). C2, C4, C5: N/A	J4: truth hidden, iniquity increased (4 Ezra 5:1–2). J7: decline in “the footsteps of the Messiah” (m. Sotah 9:15). J1–J3, J5, J6: N/A
P2 Cosmic disruption	I1: smoke (Q 44:10); sun folded up, stars falling (Q 81:1–2). I2: sun rising from the west, landslides (2901). I3: earthquakes (1036). I4: N/A	C1: sun and moon darkened (Matt 24:29). C5: seals, trumpets, bowls (Rev 6; 8–9; 16). C2–C4: N/A	J4: sun shining at night, moon by day (4 Ezra 5:4). J1–J3, J5–J7: N/A
F1 Adversary figure	I2: Dajjal (169, 2937). I3: Dajjal, called a liar (3439, 7131). Deception explicit. I1, I4: N/A	C1: false messiahs (Matt 24:24). C3: the lawless one with deceptive signs (2 Thess 2:3–10). C4: many antichrists as false teachers (1 John 2:18, 22). C5: two beasts; the second deceives (Rev 13). C2: N/A	J1: “little horn,” hostile king (Dan 7:8, 24–25). J2: Gog (Ezek 38). J5: Belial and the Kittim (1QM 1). J6: Armilus, hostile ruler. J3, J4, J7: N/A
F2 Messianic or redeemer figure	I1: Q 4:159; 43:61 (interpretive). I2: ‘Isa (155, 156, 2937). I3: ‘Isa (2222, 3448). I4: Mahdi (4282–4285)	C1: Son of Man coming (Matt 24:30). C2: the Lord’s descent (1 Thess 4:16). C3: the Lord destroys the lawless one (2 Thess 2:8). C5: rider on the white horse (Rev 19:11–16). C4: N/A	J1: one like a son of man (Dan 7:13–14). J3: Son of Man, Chosen One (1 En 46–48; 62). J4: messiah (4 Ezra 7:28–29; 12:31–34). J5: messiahs of Aaron and Israel (1QS 9:11). J6: messianic figures. J7: Davidic messiah (b. Sanh. 97a–99a). J2: N/A
F3 Final battle	I1: Gog and Magog released (Q 21:96). I2: Dajjal killed at Ludd; Gog and Magog destroyed (2937); battle at al-A‘maq or Dabiq (2897). I3, I4: N/A	C5: Armageddon (Rev 16:14–16); rider’s victory (19:11–21); Gog and Magog (20:7–10). C1–C4: N/A	J2: defeat of Gog (Ezek 38–39). J5: war of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness (1QM 1–2). J6: defeat of Armilus. J1, J3, J4, J7: N/A
E1 Resurrection	I1: Q 22:7; 36:51; 75:3–4. I2–I4: N/A	C2: the dead in Christ rise first (1 Thess 4:16). C5: first and general resurrection (Rev 20:4–6, 12–13). C1, C3, C4: N/A	J1: “many” will awake (Dan 12:2). J3: earth returns the dead (1 En 51:1). J4: earth gives up the dead (4 Ezra 7:32). J7: m. Sanh. 10:1. J2, J5, J6: N/A
E2 Judgment	I1: scale (Q 21:47; 101:6–9). I2: bridge over Hell (183). I3: bridge (7439). I4: N/A	C1: separation of the nations (Matt 25:31–46). C5: great white throne, books (Rev 20:11–15). C2–C4: N/A	J1: Ancient of Days, books opened (Dan 7:9–10). J3: judgment by the Chosen One (1 En 62). J4: the Most High on the seat of judgment (4 Ezra 7:33–44). J2, J5–J7: N/A
E3 Afterlife	I1: Paradise and Hell (Q 47:15; 56:10–56). I2–I4: N/A	C1: eternal punishment and eternal life (Matt 25:46). C5: new heaven and new earth, New Jerusalem, lake of fire (Rev 20:14–15; 21:1–4). C2–C4: N/A	J1: everlasting life and everlasting contempt (Dan 12:2–3). J4: paradise and the furnace of Gehenna (4 Ezra 7:36). J7: World to Come (m. Sanh. 10:1; b. Ber. 34b). J2, J3, J5, J6: N/A

Source: Authors’ coding (Waruwu et al., 2026) of the units listed in Table 2. Hadith are cited by number.

Table 5 shows three convergences. First, all three traditions contain material in each of the three phases, but not every text unit does. Some units, such as Daniel 7–12, 4 Ezra, and Revelation, combine material from all or most phases, whereas others, such as the Johannine letters or Ezekiel 38–39, contribute to only one or two categories. The structure of preliminary signs, figures and battles, and resurrection and judgment is therefore a feature of the traditions taken as corpora, not of each individual text. This shared architecture corresponds to what J. J. Collins (2016) calls the apocalyptic worldview, in which the present age is seen as corrupt and redemption requires divine intervention rather than gradual reform.

Second, an adversary figure appears in all three traditions, but the parallel is uneven and diachronic rather than synchronic. In the Christian and Islamic units, the adversary is a deceiver: the lawless one works deceptive signs (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10), the second beast deceives the earth (Revelation 13:14), and the Dajjal is called a liar and exposed by his defect (Bukhari 7131). In the earlier Jewish units, the adversaries, namely the little horn of Daniel, Gog, and Belial, are hostile kings, nations, or spiritual powers. Armilus appears only in an early seventh-century apocalypse, centuries after the Christian texts and roughly contemporary with the formation of Islamic eschatology (Himmelfarb, 2017; Reeves, 2005). Because the three figures differ in date, status, and attributes, they are better described as functional analogues than as structural equivalents. Their shared features are partly explained by a common inheritance of the ancient Near Eastern combat myth (A. Y. Collins, 2001; McGinn, 2000) and partly by the shared imperial and religious setting of Late Antiquity (Shoemaker, 2018).

Third, resurrection followed by judgment is affirmed in all three traditions, but with different emphases. The Qur'an affirms a general resurrection and judgment by the scale. The Christian units link resurrection to union with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16) and judgment before a throne (Revelation 20:11–15). The Jewish units move from the resurrection of “many” in Daniel 12:2 to the rabbinic affirmation of resurrection as a matter of doctrine (m. Sanhedrin 10:1). The means of judgment, whether a scale and bridge, the separation of the nations, or books opened before a throne, are distinctive to each corpus (Segal, 2004; Wright, 2003).

The divergences are equally clear, but they are positions associated with specific texts and communities rather than single, uniform doctrines. The most visible divergence concerns Jesus. In the New Testament units, the returning Christ is the Son of Man who comes in glory and judges (Matthew 24:30; 25:31). In the Sunni hadith coded here, 'Isa returns as a just judge who kills the Dajjal and defers to the community's own leader in prayer (Muslim 155, 156, 2937), and the Qur'anic basis for his return depends on the interpretation of Q 4:159 and 43:61 (Okan et al., 2026). In the Jewish units, Jesus has no eschatological role; the expected figure is a Davidic king (b. Sanhedrin 97a–99a; Fredriksen, 2000), and some apocalypses add heavenly or additional messianic figures (1 Enoch 46–48; Sefer Zerubbabel). Within Christianity, too, the timing and nature of the return are interpreted in different ways, as the millennial positions discussed above show.

A second divergence concerns scope. Several Jewish units are oriented toward the restoration of Israel, as in the ingathering that concludes Ezekiel 39:25–29, although

apocalyptic texts such as 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra also contain universal judgment scenes (J. J. Collins, 2016). The Christian and Islamic units envisage the judgment of all humanity while also distinguishing a community of the saved. A third divergence concerns sequence: only some units order their material, and the orders they give are not identical. The three-phase grid thus organizes comparable content; it does not show that the traditions share a single timeline.

RQ3: Textual Relationships and the Case of Gog and Magog

Table 6 applies the criteria described in the Methods to eight motif pairs. The results show documented textual relationships for some pairs, especially along the Jewish–Christian line, whereas most pairs involving the Islamic sources are better described as parallels within a shared Late Antique background.

Table 6. Assessment of Selected Motif Relationships

Motif pair	Evidence against the six criteria	Classification	Confidence	Key scholarship
Daniel 7:13 → Matthew 24:30	Rare shared phrasing (“Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven”); chronology; channel through Jewish scripture	Explicit reworking	High	J. J. Collins (2016)
Daniel 7:3–8 → Revelation 13:1–2	Beast from the sea combining features of Daniel’s four beasts; chronology; shared genre	Explicit reworking	High	Bauckham (1993); Koester (2014)
Ezekiel 38–39 → Revelation 20:7–10	Names Gog and Magog; nations gathered against God’s people and destroyed by fire; chronology	Explicit reworking with transformation	High	Koester (2014); Lee (2017)
Syriac Alexander Legend → Q 18:83–102	Shared narrative of a ruler who builds a barrier against Gog and Magog; dating debated; channel through Syriac Christian tradition	Possible reception within a shared background	Moderate	Tesei (2023); Van Bladel (2008)
Biblical Gog and Magog → hadith (Muslim 2937)	Shared names and destructive hordes; no verbal parallels; Qur’an as intermediate	Typological parallel within a shared tradition	Moderate	D. Cook (2002)
Christian Antichrist traditions ↔ Dajjal	Shared function of an end-time deceiver killed by Jesus; different attributes; channel unspecified	Typological parallel; transmission plausible but not demonstrated	Low to moderate	Saritoprak (2003); Shoemaker (2018)
Byzantine Christian context → Armilus (Sefer Zerubbabel)	Contemporary with Byzantine apocalyptic; framed as a response to Christian empire	Reception through polemical response	Moderate	Himmelfarb (2017); Shoemaker (2018)
Daniel 12:2 ↔ Qur’anic resurrection	Shared doctrine; no shared phrasing; belief widespread in Late Antiquity	Typological parallel; independent development possible	Low	Segal (2004)

Source: Authors’ assessment (Waruwu et al., 2026). Arrows indicate the direction of a documented or possible relationship; double arrows indicate parallels without established direction.

The Gog and Magog motif is the clearest case in which a sequence of textual relationships can be traced, and Figure 2 summarizes it. Magog first appears as a people in the table of nations (Genesis 10:2). In Ezekiel 38–39, Gog of the land of Magog is an individual

ruler who leads a northern coalition against Israel and is destroyed by God. Lee (2017) notes that many of Gog’s allies carry traits earlier attributed to Judah’s political partners, so that the oracle also reflects Judah’s own political history. Revelation 20:7–10 explicitly takes up the names but transforms them: Gog and Magog become the nations at the four corners of the earth, gathered by Satan after the thousand years and consumed by fire. In the Qur’an, Yajuj and Majuj are peoples whom Dhu al-Qarnayn confines behind a barrier until their release near the Hour (Q 18:94–99; 21:96), and the hadith narrate their release and destruction after the death of the Dajjal (Muslim 2937). The Qur’anic narrative closely parallels the Syriac Alexander Legend, in which Alexander builds a gate against these peoples. Van Bladel (2008) argues that the Qur’anic account draws on this Syriac tradition, and Tesei (2023) dates an earlier version of the legend to the sixth century, which makes such a background chronologically possible.

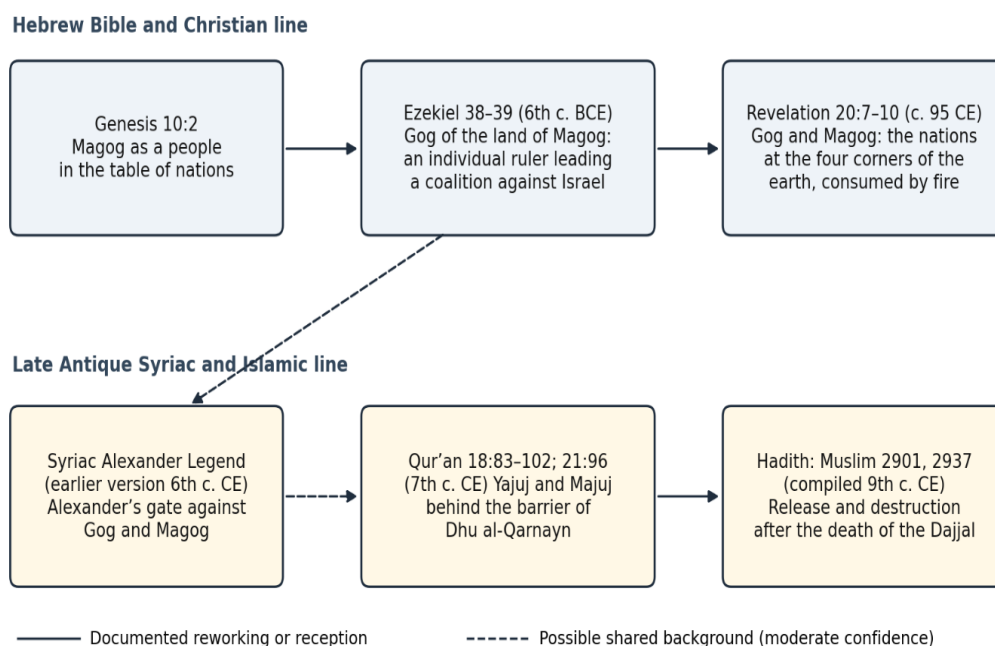


Figure 2. Textual Relationships of the Gog and Magog Motif

Source: Authors’ analysis (Waruwu et al., 2026), based on Lee (2017), Tesei (2023), and Van Bladel (2008).

Figure 2 distinguishes documented reworking (solid arrows) from a possible shared background (dashed arrows) and places the motif in a wider setting. Tesei (2023) locates the Syriac legend at the crossroads of Byzantium and Iran, and Iranian traditions of a final battle and renovation of the world have long been proposed as a background to Jewish and later apocalyptic thought (Zaehner, 1961). Because most Zoroastrian eschatological texts survive in Middle Persian works compiled in the ninth century or later, the direction and extent of any such influence cannot be established from the present corpus. The case therefore shows a graded chain: high confidence for the Ezekiel–Revelation relationship, moderate confidence for the Syriac background of Qur’an 18, and an open question for any Iranian contribution.

For most other pairs, the evidence supports parallels rather than direct borrowing. Second Temple Jewish texts provide documented roots for several Christian motifs, notably the

son-of-man imagery and the beasts of Revelation. For the Islamic sources, however, the coded material does not show verbal dependence on Jewish or Christian texts apart from the Gog and Magog case, and the similarities are better explained by a shared Late Antique religious and imperial setting (Shoemaker, 2018; Tesei, 2018). The claim that Second Temple apocalypticism was the single generative matrix of all three traditions is therefore not supported by this corpus; it remains a hypothesis for further study.

RQ4: Political Uses of Eschatological Motifs in the Selected Literature

RQ4 is limited to how the selected scholarly literature represents the political uses of eschatological motifs; the study did not collect data on political behavior. The findings below refer to specific movements and periods described in that literature. They are not representative of the broader Muslim, Christian, or Jewish communities.

In the Christian case, the literature links premillennial and particularly dispensationalist readings to Christian Zionism in the United States (Boyer, 1992; Weber, 2004). Survey research supports an association between beliefs about prophecy and support for the State of Israel among evangelicals, while also showing that this support is weaker among younger evangelicals (Inbari et al., 2021). Whether such beliefs have shaped United States foreign policy is debated in the literature and was not measured in this study.

In the Islamic case, the literature documents the instrumental use of apocalyptic hadith by the Islamic State, which named its propaganda magazine *Dabiq* after the place where, according to Muslim 2897, Muslims and the Romans will meet in battle before the conquest of Constantinople. Analyses of the magazine show how it combined prophetic and apocalyptic material with identity-based appeals in order to build legitimacy and recruit readers (Colas, 2017; Ingram, 2016), and how its visual narratives changed over time (Fahmy, 2020). Contemporary Muslim apocalyptic literature more broadly has drawn on the same hadith traditions (D. Cook, 2005; Filiu, 2011). Historical studies also show that Mahdist expectation has been invoked in particular political settings, including in Iranian Shi'ism (Amanat, 2009), and that Mahdi traditions were politicized by specific movements (Muqtada, 2019).

In the Jewish case, the literature describes how sections of religious Zionism have given the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) an increasingly central place. Persico (2017) interprets this development as an outgrowth of an ethnocentric strand of Zionism, and Hershkowitz (2026) traces the movement of the Temple Mount from the margins to the core of religious-Zionist identity. A representative survey of Israeli Jews conducted in 2023 measured beliefs about eschatology and the Temple Mount and found differences by age and religiosity (Inbari & Bumin, 2024). Because Jerusalem and the Temple Mount carry eschatological significance in all three traditions, the literature identifies the site as one where religious expectation and political conflict intersect (Gorenberg, 2002).

The literature also points to a constructive potential. The shared vocabulary of divine justice and accountability can serve as a resource for interreligious dialogue (Swidler, 2014). One documented practice is Scriptural Reasoning, in which Jewish, Christian, and Muslim

participants study their scriptures together (Ford, 2006). The present study does not claim that such initiatives have addressed eschatology specifically, nor does it measure their effects; it suggests only that a source-referenced comparison, such as Tables 4–6, can provide material for this kind of shared reading.

Methodological Implications of the Three-Phase Framework

The three-phase framework differs from existing classifications in what it compares. Genre typologies, such as the distinction between historical apocalypses and otherworldly journeys, classify whole texts by form (J. J. Collins, 2016), and motif studies typically follow one figure or theme across sources (McGinn, 2000; Tesei, 2023). The framework used here classifies content across texts of different genres and statuses, including scripture, hadith, apocalypses, and legal literature, so that the same categories can be compared across traditions and the absence of a category can be recorded (Table 5).

The corpus also contains counterexamples to a sequential reading of the framework. The Qur'an mentions individual signs but gives no sequence, and Muslim 2901 lists the major signs without a strict order. First Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 moves directly from the Lord's descent to resurrection without any adversary or battle. The rabbinic passages discuss the messianic age without an adversary figure, and a recapitulative reading of Revelation does not treat the seals, trumpets, and bowls as consecutive. In light of these cases, the framework is specified here in revised form: the three phases are content categories rather than chronological stages, and narrative order is coded only where the text states it. In this form, the framework makes the comparison transparent and verifiable, but it does not by itself establish historical connections between traditions; these must be assessed separately, as in Table 6.

CONCLUSION

This study compared the signs and figures of the end times in seventeen primary text units from the Islamic, Christian, and Jewish traditions. All three traditions, taken as corpora, contain preliminary signs, eschatological figures and battles, and resurrection followed by judgment, but these elements are distributed unevenly across texts and ordered differently where they are ordered at all. The adversary figures differ in date, status, and attributes and are better understood as functional analogues than as equivalents. The Mahdi and the returning Jesus take distinct forms in Sunni and Twelver Shi'i Islam and in Christianity, and Jewish adversary and messianic figures change across scripture, Second Temple apocalypses, rabbinic literature, and later apocalypses. These findings describe analogies observed within the selected corpus. Documented textual relationships were found along the Jewish–Christian line and, with moderate confidence, for the Syriac background of the Qur'anic Gog and Magog narrative, while the broader hypothesis of a single genealogical origin remains a subject for further study.

The novelty of the study lies in combining a three-phase content framework, applied to texts of different genres and statuses, with explicit criteria that distinguish textual parallels from claims of transmission. Its theoretical contribution is a transparent and verifiable model for

comparative eschatology in which every coded element is tied to a specific verse, hadith, or passage. Its practical contribution is a source-referenced overview that educators and interfaith practitioners can use to discuss shared and distinctive beliefs without treating any tradition as uniform.

The study has several limitations. The corpus consists of selected textual strands and omits oral traditions, mystical eschatologies, Shi'i hadith collections, and many exegetical works. The analysis relied on translations rather than on independent original-language analysis, the coding was carried out by a single researcher, and the secondary literature was selected through a structured search without a formal quality appraisal of sources. Future research should involve a second coder and original-language analysis, extend the corpus to Shi'i, rabbinic, and Zoroastrian sources, and examine through separate empirical research how eschatological beliefs function in specific contemporary communities.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Author Contributions

Nofedin Waruwu; contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, textual analysis, and manuscript preparation. Marlina Nasrani Juliana; contributed to literature review, data interpretation, and manuscript refinement. Gerbin Tamba contributed; to analysis, discussion development, and critical review of the manuscript. Stefanus Meo Nekin; contributed to review, editing, and final manuscript validation. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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