



1 Thessalonians

LIVING FOR CHRIST'S SOON RETURN



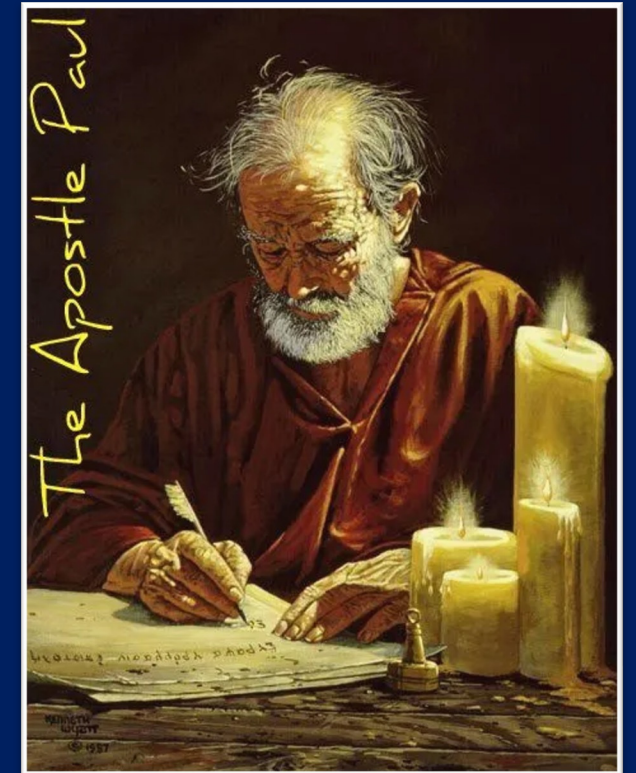
Dr. Andy Woods

Senior Pastor – Sugar Land Bible Church

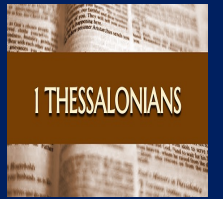
President – Chafer Theological Seminary

Structure

1 THESSALONIANS 1-3	1 THESSALONIANS 4-5
■ Personal Experience	■ Practical Exhortation
■ Looking Back	■ Looking Forward



Structure



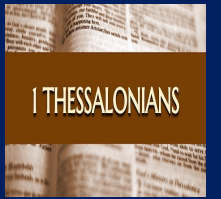
■ Personal (1–3)

- ◆ Genuine conversion (1)
- ◆ Impure motives (2:1-16)
- ◆ Lack of concern (2:17–3:13)

■ Practical (4–5)

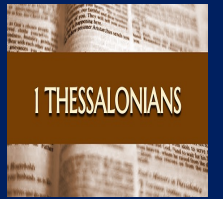
- ◆ Immorality (4:1-8)
- ◆ Laziness (4:9-12)
- ◆ Eschatology (4:13–5:11)
- ◆ Ministry imbalances (5:12-15)
- ◆ Progressive sanctification (5:16-28)

Christian Living (4:1-12)



- General conduct (4:1-2)
- Negative command: sexual sin (4:3-8)
- Positive command: brotherly love (4:9-12)

Structure



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1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from . . .

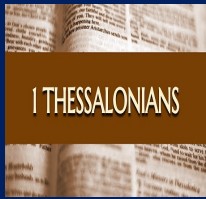


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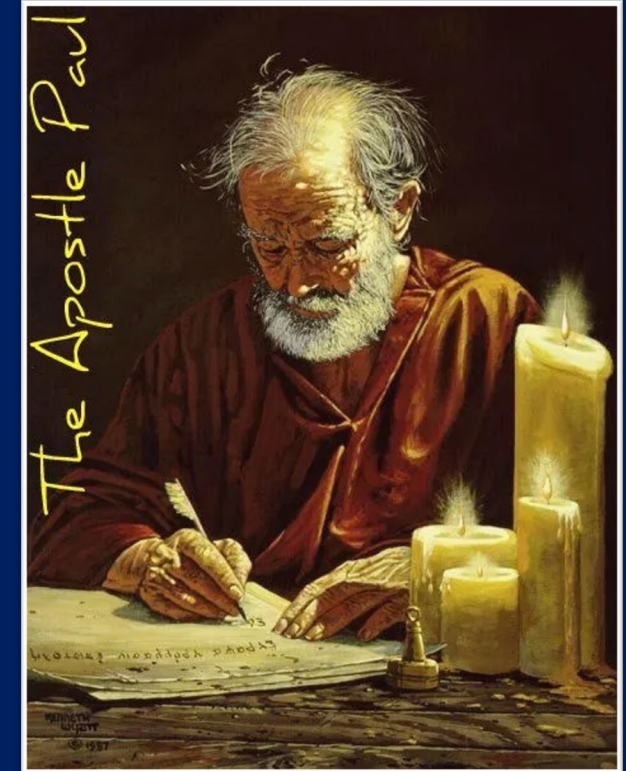
...heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words."



Unique Characteristics



- Every chapter ends with a reference to the Second Advent
- Small amount of time in between planting of the church and the first letter to the church



2 Thessalonians 2:5

“Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?”



1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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Order of Paul's Letters

1. Galatians (A.D. 49)
2. 1–2 Thessalonians (A.D. 51)
3. 1–2 Corinthians (A.D. 56)
4. Romans (A.D. 57)
5. Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians (A.D. 60–62)
6. 1 Timothy, Titus (A.D. 62–66)
7. 2 Timothy (A.D. 67)



Five General Comments (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

1. Not the first mention of The Rapture
2. “Rapture” comes from the Latin
3. The Rapture is distinct from the Second Advent
4. Only for the Church Age believer
5. Pre-tribulationism is the correct view



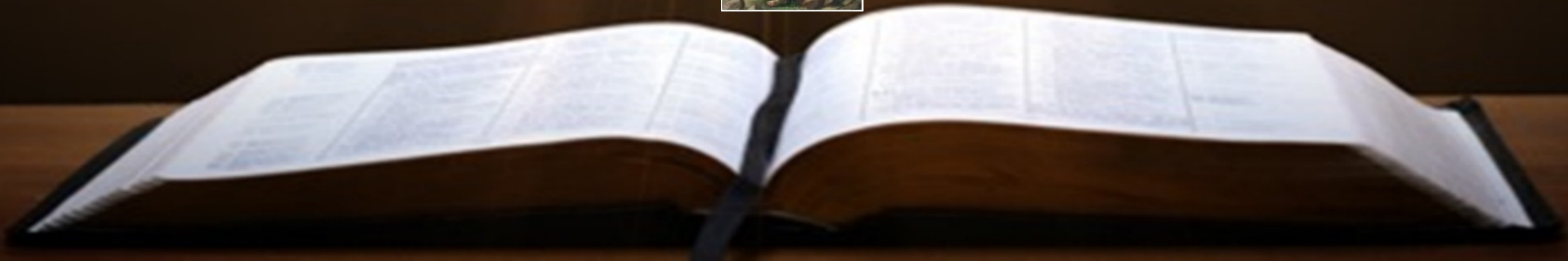
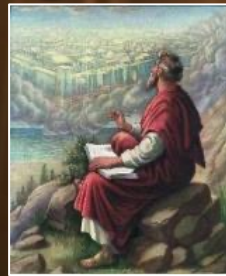
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John 14:1–4

¹ “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.”



Parallels

JOHN 14:1-4

1 THESS 4:13-18

trouble (1)

sorrow (13)

Believe (1)

believe (14)

God, me (1)

Jesus, God (14)

told you (2)

say to you (15)

come again (3)

coming of the Lord (15)

receive, you (3)

caught up (17)

to myself (3)

to meet the Lord (17)

be where I am (3)

ever be with the Lord (17)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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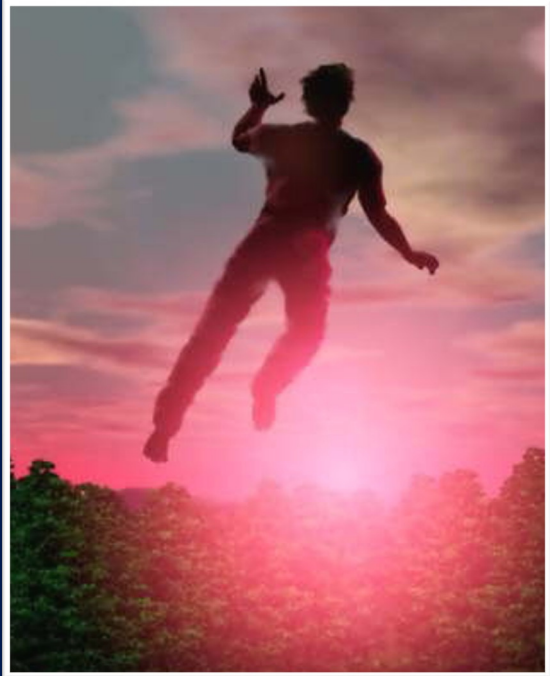
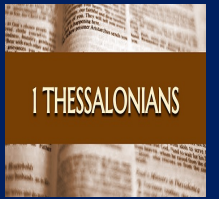
¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up (*harpazō*) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words."



Catching Away of All Living Believers

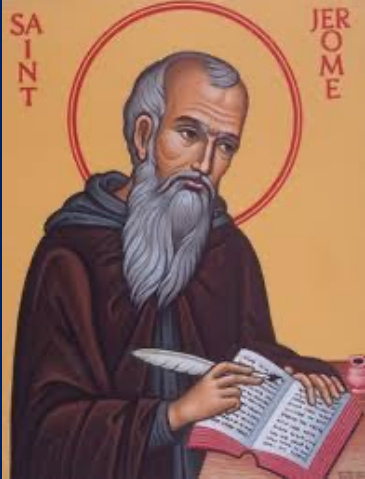
(1 Thess. 4:17)



- *Harpazo* = seized or caught up by force
- *Harpazo* (Greek) = *rapere* (Latin) = rapture (English)

Latin Vulgate Translation

(1 Thess. 4:17)



“Deinde nos, qui vivimus, qui relinquimur, simul rapiemur cum illis in nubibus obviam Christo in aëra, et sic semper cum Domino erimus.”

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RAPTURE DISTINCT FROM SECOND ADVENT

RAPTURE

(1 Thess 4:13-17; 1 Cor 15:51-57)

SECOND COMING

(Rev 19:11-16)

Christ comes in the air (1 Thess 4:16)

Christ comes to the earth (Zech 14:4)

For His saints (1 Thess 4:15-17)

With His saints (Rev 19:14)

Blessing (1 Thess 4:18)

Judgment (Rev 19:15)

Effects only believers (1 Thess 4:16)

Effects both believers and unbelievers
(Rev 19:15)

Invisible (1 Thess 4:16)

Visible to all (Rev 1:7)

Announced only by an archangel (1 Thess 4:16)

Involves myriads of angels (Jude 14)

Resurrection (1 Cor 15: 51)

No resurrection

Rescue of the church (1 Thess 1:10)

Rescue of Israel (Matt 23:37-39)

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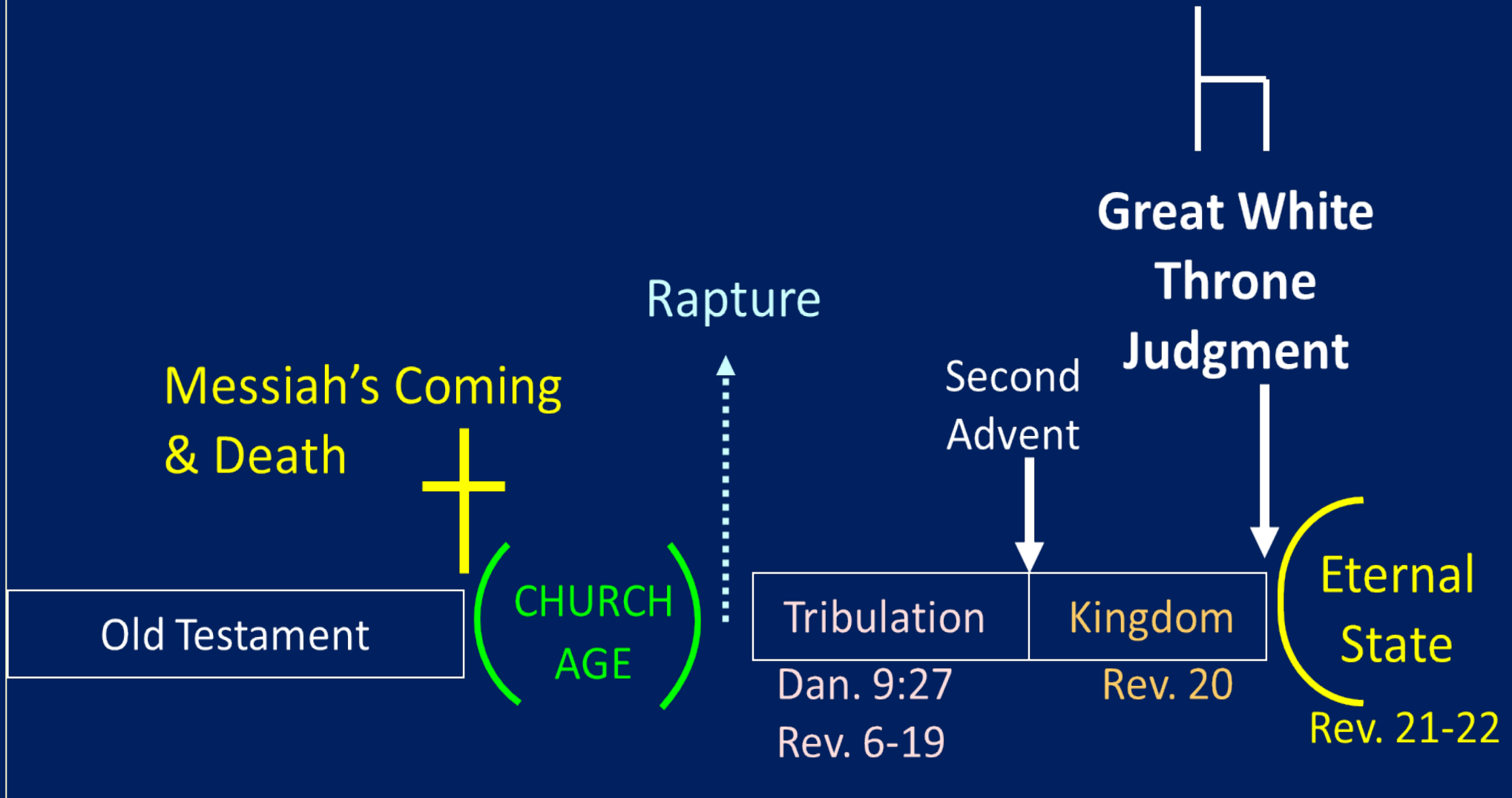


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Prophecy Panorama



Revelation 20:4-6

“⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and **they came to life [zaō]** and reigned with Christ for a thousand years....



Revelation 20:4-6

...⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life [zaō] until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection [*anastasis*]. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection [*anastasis*]; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”



Revelation 20:4-6

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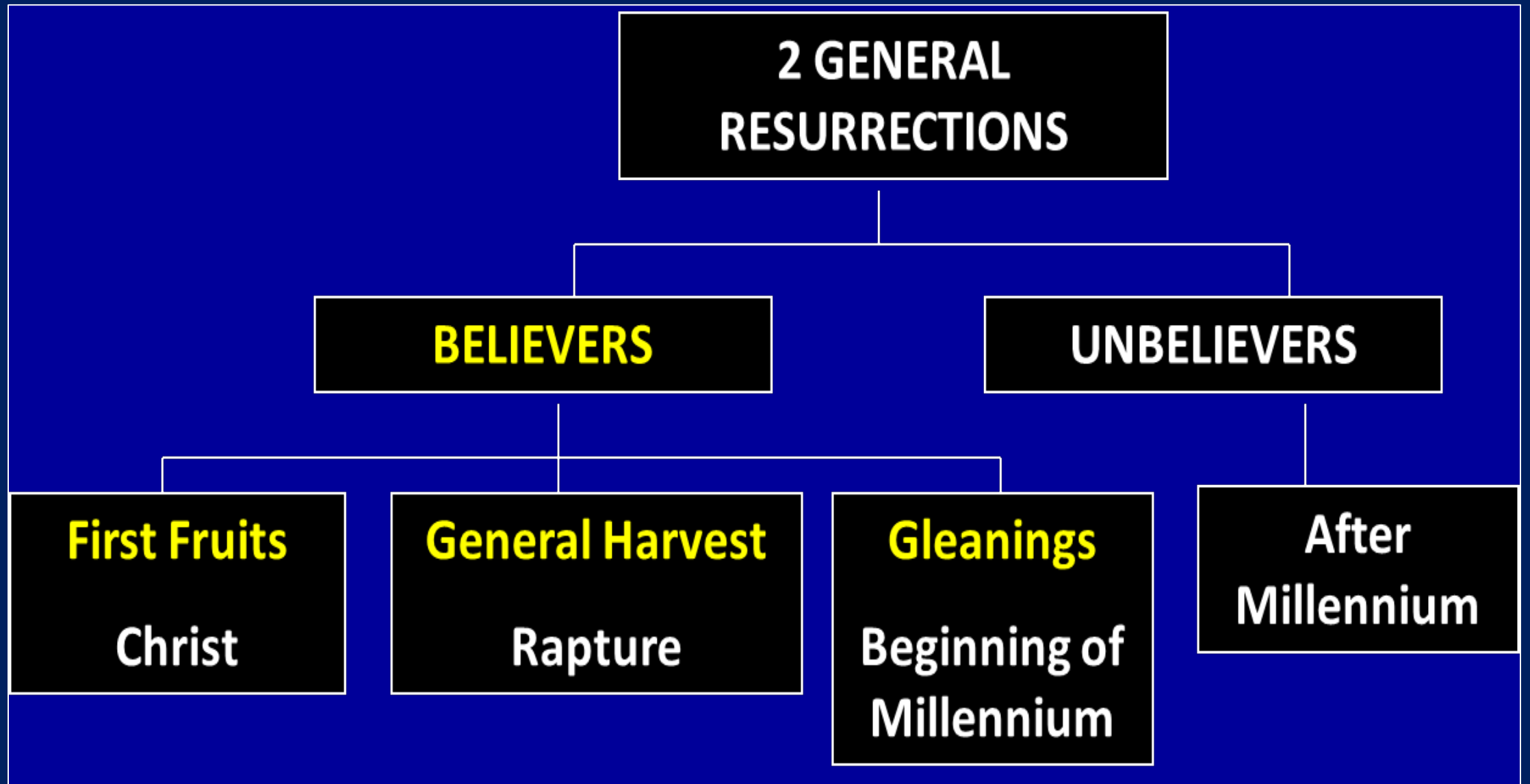


1 Corinthians 15:20-23

“²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the **first fruits** of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the **first fruits**, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.”



God's Resurrection Program



1 Corinthians 15:20-23

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Order or Tagma (1 Cor. 15:23)

- General – Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23)
- Officer – Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
- Soldiers – OT saints & Tribulation martyrs (Rev. 20:4)
- Captives – Unsaved of all ages (Rev. 20:5)

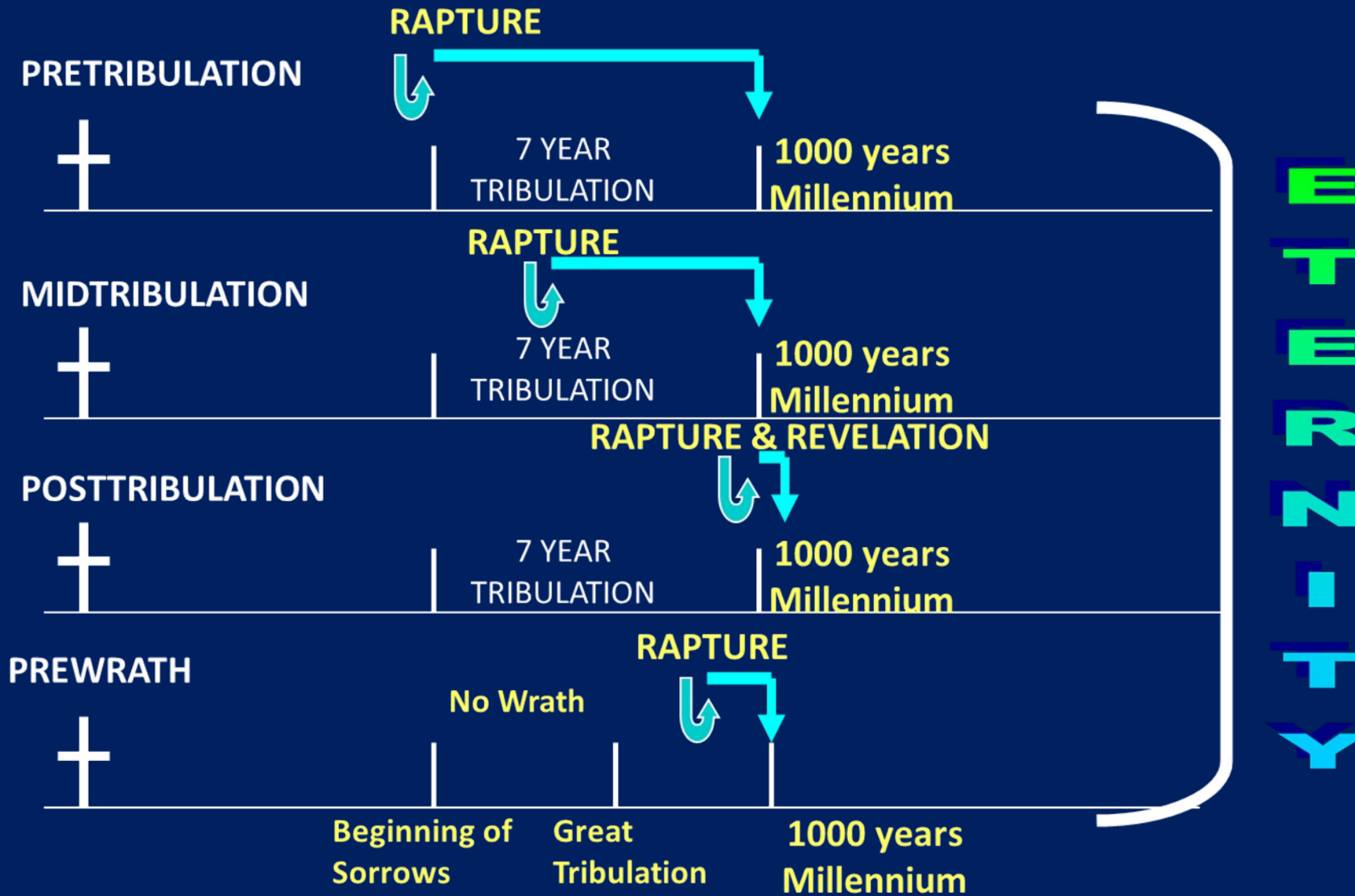


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RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISION



When is the Rapture?

7 Arguments Favoring the Pre-Tribulation View

1. Tribulation's purpose concerns Israel (Jer 30:7; Dan 9:24)
2. No biblical reference to the church on earth during the Tribulation period (Rev 4-22)
3. Church is promised an exemption from divine wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 5:9; Rev 3:10; 6:17)
4. Rapture is imminent (1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)
5. Rapture is a comfort (1 Thess 4:18)
6. Antichrist cannot come to power until the restrainer is removed (2 Thess 2:6-7)
7. Symbolic parallels (2 Peter 2:5-9)

5. Pre-Tribulationism is the Correct View

- A. Imminency (15)
- B. Comfort (18)
- C. Exemption from Divine Wrath
(1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)



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1 Corinthians 15:51

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep,
but we will all be changed.”

An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat on a dark surface. The pages are white with some faint text. In the center of the book, there is a glowing, circular hole that looks like it was torn through the paper. The hole is surrounded by a bright, golden light that radiates outwards. Inside the hole, the word "Mystery" is written in a white, serif font against a black background.

Mystery

Imminent

(1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)



- Imminency definition
- James 5:8; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Cor 1:7; Philip 3:20
- We are to be looking for Jesus Christ and not the Antichrist!
- Motivator (Holiness, Evangelism)
- Feast of Trumpets?

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Wayne Brindle

"Biblical Evidence for the Imminence of the Rapture,"
Bibliotheca Sacra 158, no. 630 (April-June 2001): 138-51.

“Four criteria may be suggested, any one of which indicates imminence:

- (1) The passage speaks of Christ’s return as at any moment.
- (2) The passage speaks of Christ’s return as ‘near,’ without stating any signs that must precede His coming.
- (3) The passage speaks of Christ’s return as something that gives believers hope and encouragement, without indicating that these believers will suffer tribulation.
- (4) The passage speaks of Christ’s return as giving hope without relating it to God’s judgment of unbelievers.”

Imminent

(1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)



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1 Thessalonians 1:10

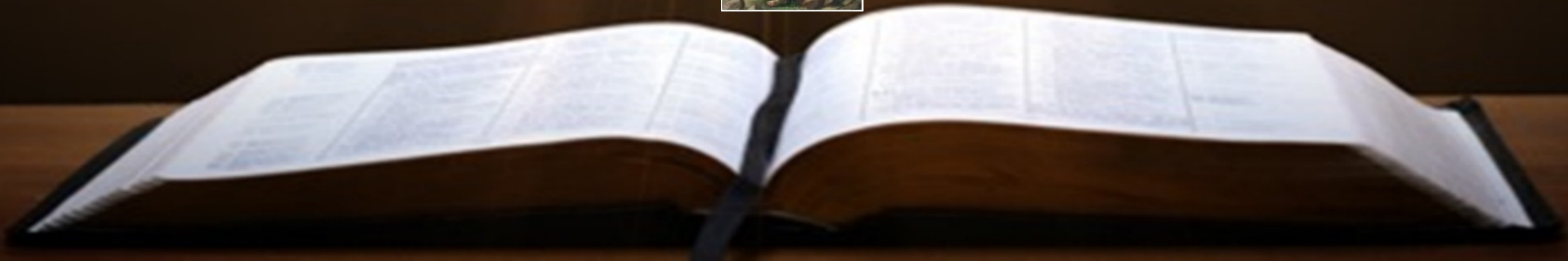
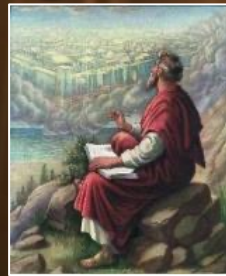
“and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues (*rhyomai*) us from (*ek*) the wrath (*orgē*) to come..”

WRATH



John 14:1–4

¹ “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.”



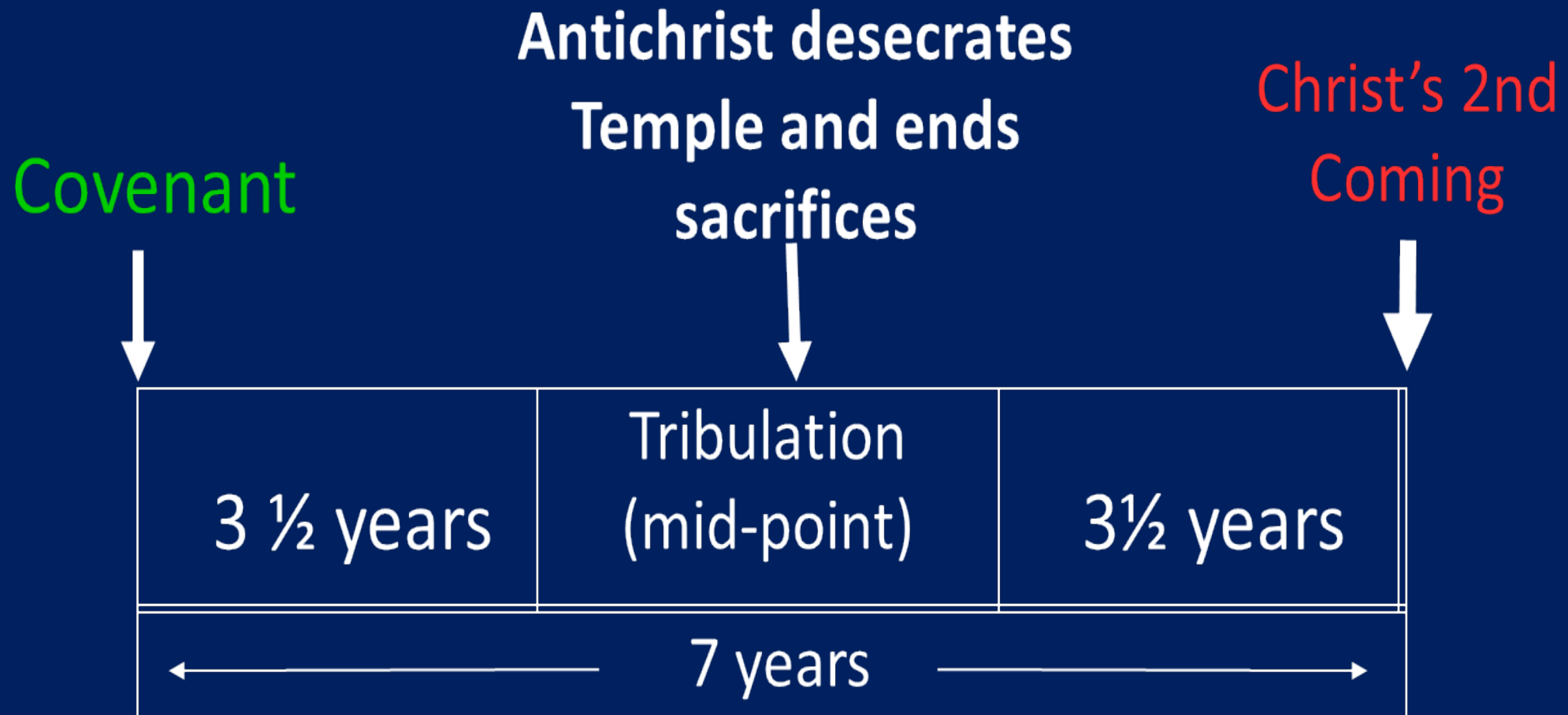
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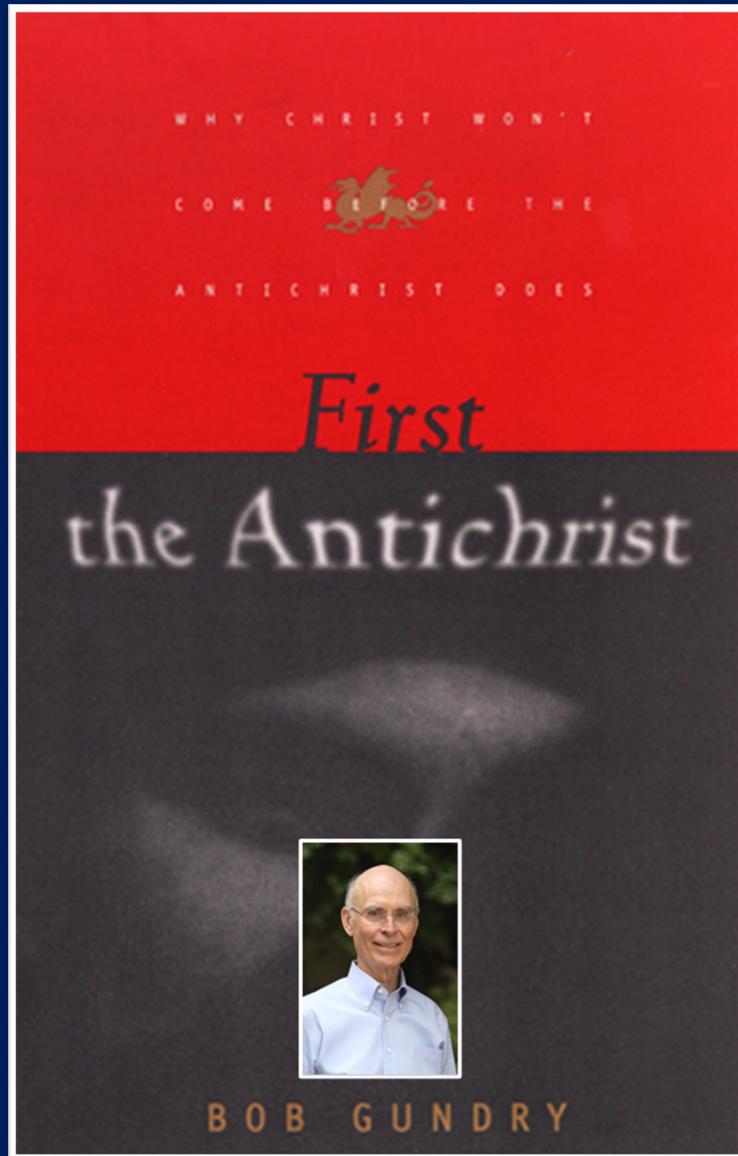
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DAN 9:27 OVERVIEW OF TRIBULATION PERIOD





Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation: Why Christ Won't Come Before the Antichrist Does* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).



Imminent

(1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)

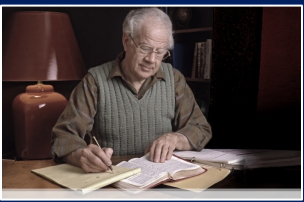


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2 Peter 3:10-11

“¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.”

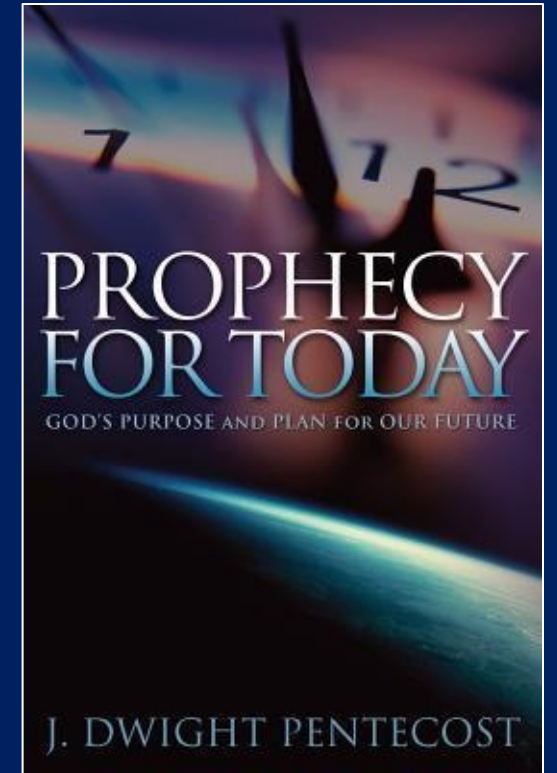




J. Dwight Pentecost

Prophecy For Today, Page 20

“A short time ago, I took occasion to go through the New Testament to mark each reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and to observe the use made of that teaching about His coming. I was struck anew with the fact that almost without exception, when the coming of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament, it is followed by an exhortation to godliness and holy living.”



Imminent

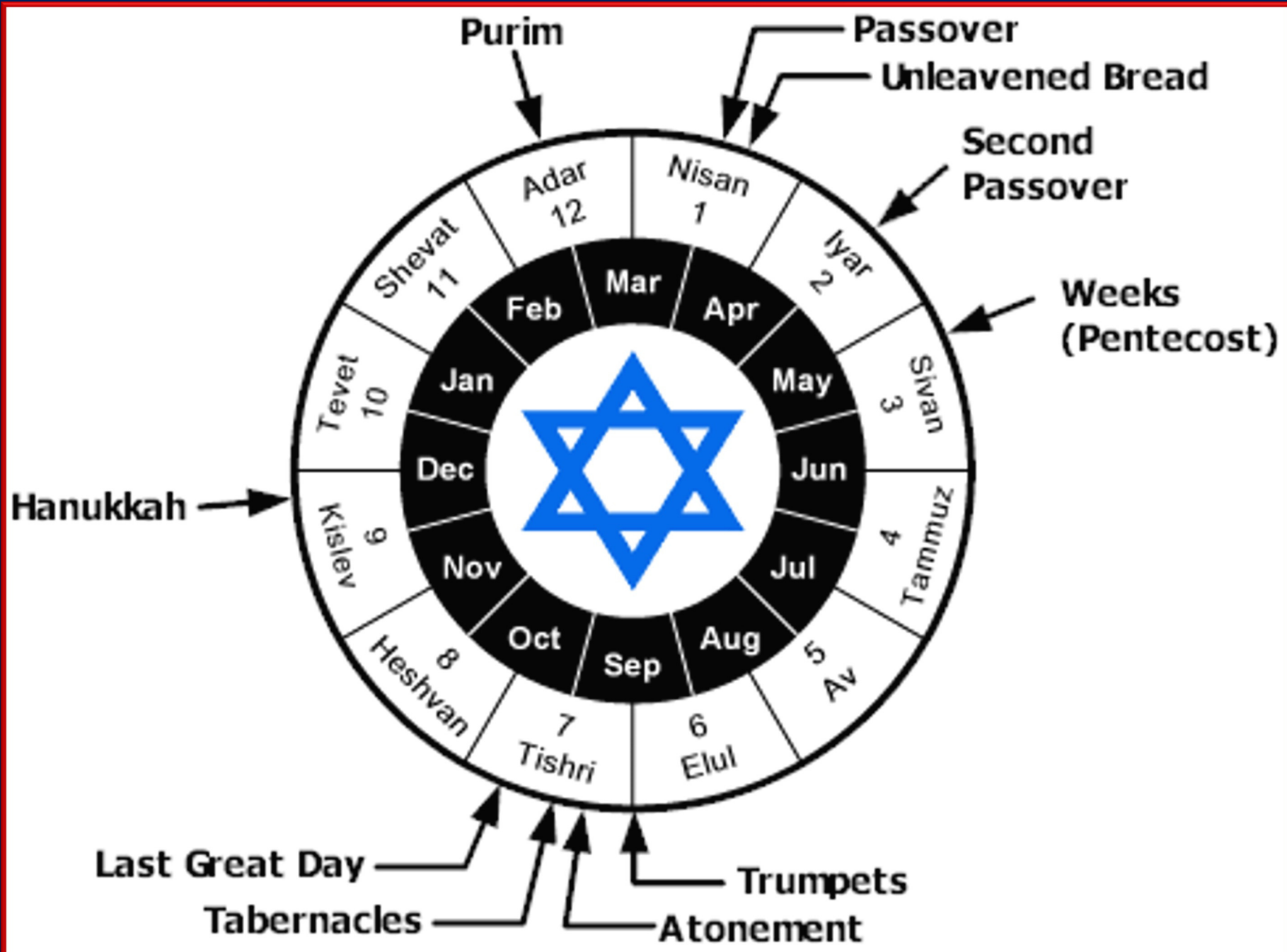
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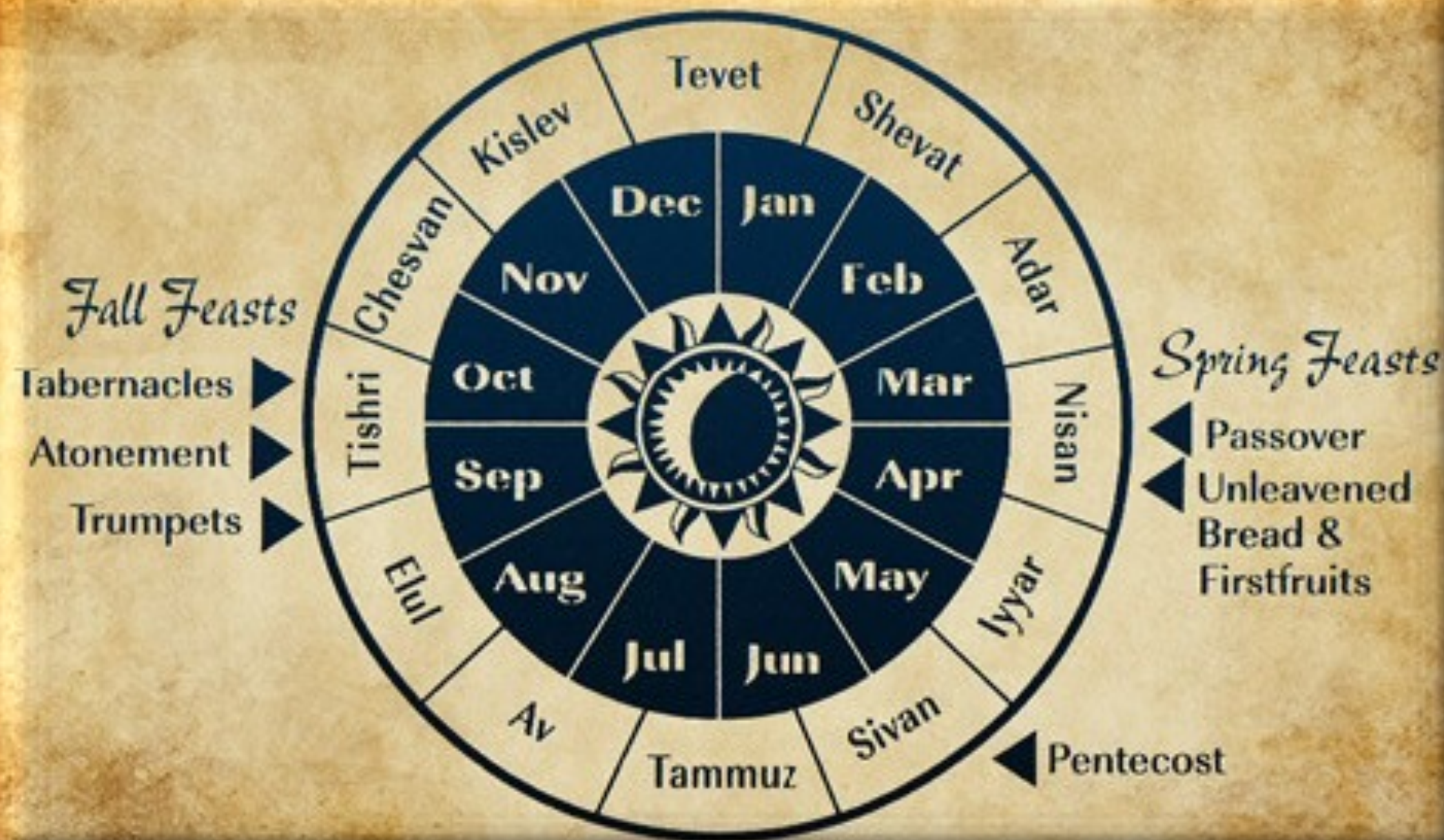


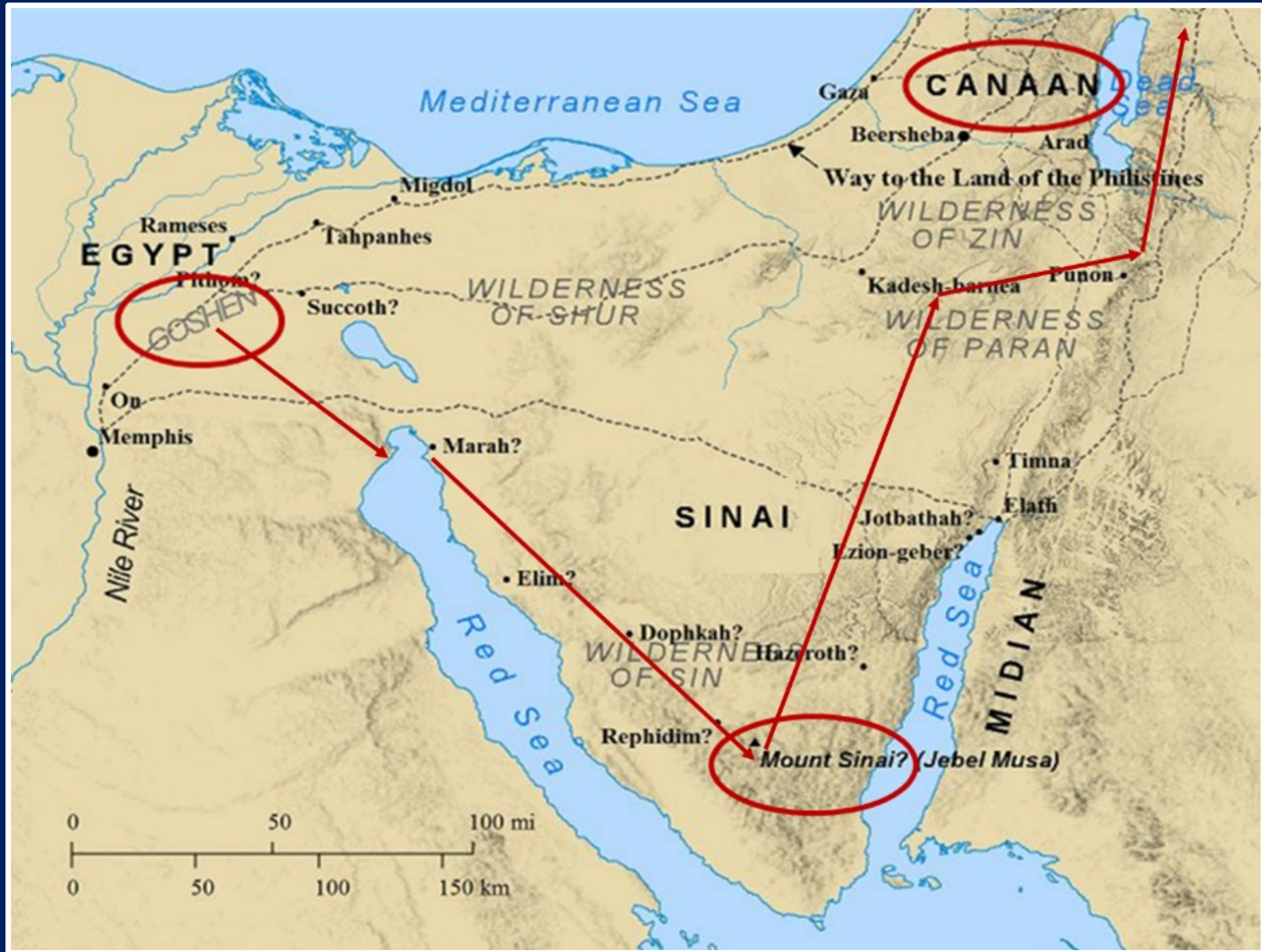
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Levitical Feasts (Lev. 23)

Feast	Season	Purpose	Type
Passover	Spring	Redemption	1 Cor. 5:7
Unleavened Bread	Spring	Separation	John 6:35
1st fruits	Spring	Praise	1 Cor. 15:20
Pentecost	Spring	Praise	Acts 2:1-4
Trumpets	Fall	New Year	Matt. 24:31
Atonement	Fall	Lev 16	Zech. 12:10
Booths	Fall	Wilderness provision	Zech. 14:16-18







Psalm 147:19-20

“He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His ordinances, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!”



5. Pre-Tribulationism is the Correct View

A. Imminency (15)

B. Comfort (18)

C. Exemption from Divine Wrath
(1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)



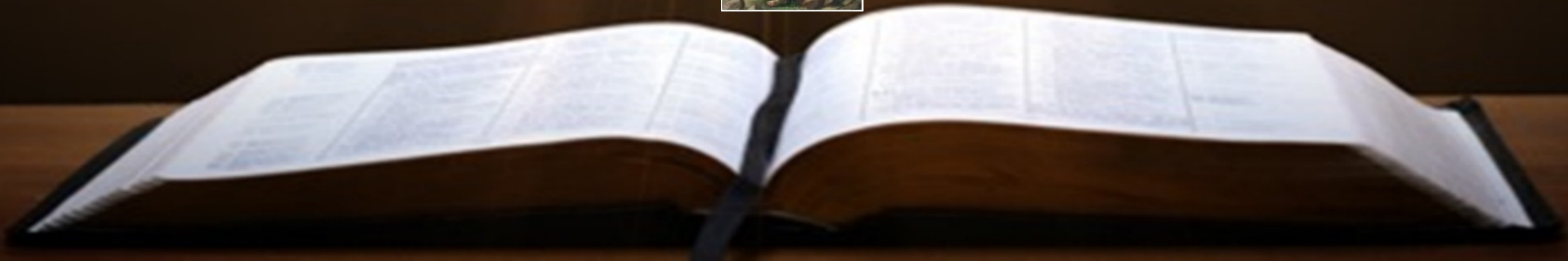
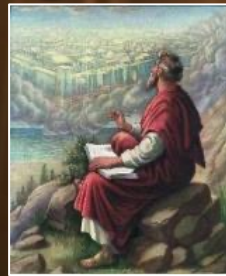
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John 14:1–4

¹ “**Do not let your heart be troubled**; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.”



Titus 2:13

“Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

Hope
Hope



Hope
Hope

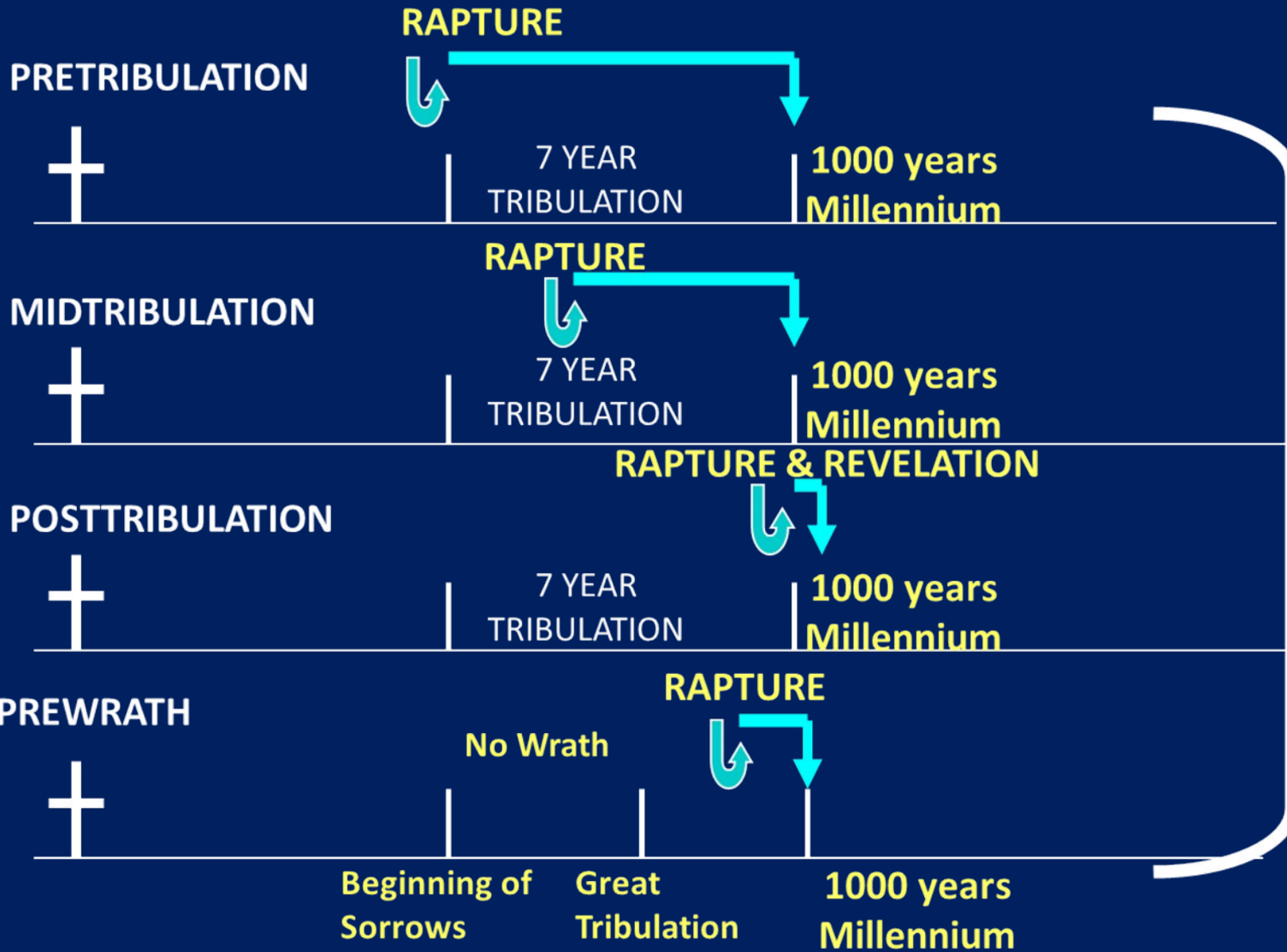


Comfort



- John 14:1; 1 Thess 4:18; Titus 2:13
- Other rapture views are not comforting since they place the church into divine wrath

RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISION



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Donald Grey Barnhouse

Cited in Mark Hitchcock, "An Overview of Pretribulational arguments,"
online: www.pre-trib.org, accessed 27 August 2013, 29-30.

“Jesus may come today, Glad day! Glad day!

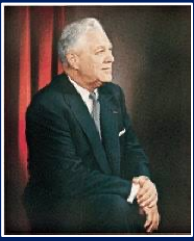
And I would see my friend;

Dangers and troubles would end If Jesus should come today.

Glad day! Glad day! Is it the crowning day?

I’ll live for today, nor anxious be, Jesus, my Lord, I soon shall see;

Glad day! Glad day! Is it the crowning day?”



Donald Grey Barnhouse

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By way of parody, Dr. Barnhouse also pointed out that if the midtrib or posttrib advocates sang this song, it would instead have to say:

“Jesus can’t come today, Sad day! Sad day! And I won't see my friend; Dangers and troubles won't end Because Jesus can't come today. Sad day! Sad day! Today is not the crowning day? I won't live for today, and anxious I'll be, The Beast and the False Prophet I soon shall see, Sad day! Sad day! Today is not the crowning day?”

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- A. Imminency (15)
- B. Comfort (18)
- C. **Exemption from Divine Wrath**
(1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)



Promised Exemption from Divine Wrath

- The promise (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 5:9; 8:1; Rev 3:10)
- Tribulation = divine wrath/anger (Rev 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 19:15)



WRATH

1 Thessalonians 1:10

“and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues (*rhyomai*) us from (*ek*) the wrath (*orgē*) to come..”

~~WRATH~~



Revelation 6:16-17

“¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath [orgé] of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath [orgé] has come, and who is able to stand?”





Rev. 6:16-17

Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary, ed.
Kenneth Barker (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 457-58.

"Mankind in his rebellion correctly analyzes the cosmic and terrestrial disturbances as a part of the great end-time day of wrath from the one sitting on the throne and from the Lamb. The verb *ēlethen* ("has come") is aorist indicative, referring to a previous arrival of wrath, not something that is about to take place. Men see the arrival of this day at least as early as the cosmic upheavals that characterize the sixth seal (6:12-14), but upon reflection they probably recognize that it was already in effect with the death of one-fourth of the population (6:7-8), the worldwide famine (6:5-6), and the global warfare (6:3-4). The rapid sequence of all of these events could not escape notice, but the light of their true explanation does not dawn upon human consciousness until the severe phenomena of the sixth seal arrive."

1st Six Seals (Revelation 6)

SEAL 1 – 6:1-2 – Advent of antichrist

SEAL 2 – 6:3-4 – War

SEAL 3 – 6:5-6 – Famine

SEAL 4 – 6:7-8 – Death

SEAL 5 – 6:9-11 – Martyrdoms

SEAL 6 – 6:12-17 – Cosmic disturbances

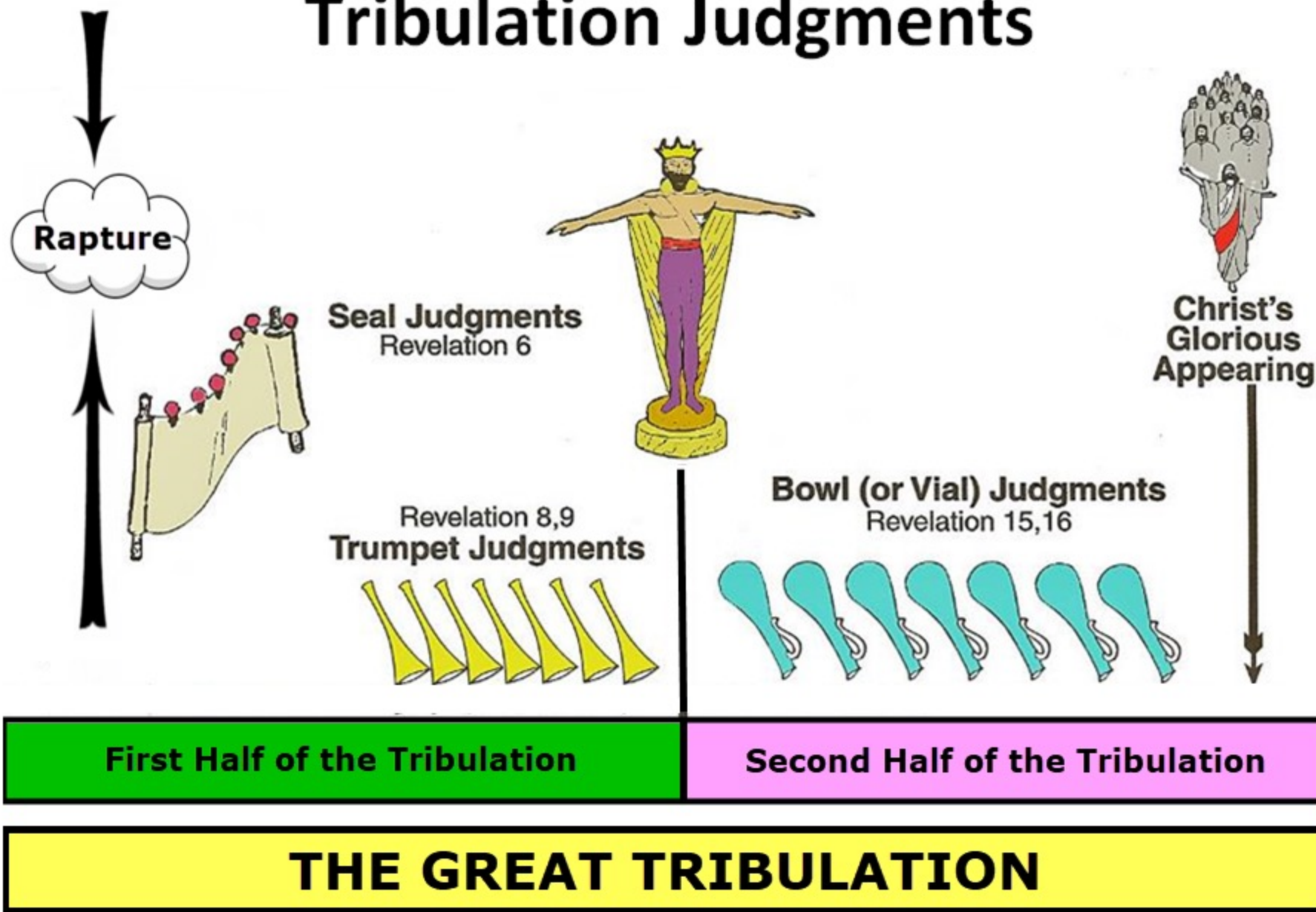


Romans 2:8-9

“⁸ but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath [*orgé*] and indignation [*thumós*]. ⁹ *There will be* tribulation [*thlípsis*] and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.”



Tribulation Judgments



Pretribulationism is not Escapism

- Trials (John 16:33)
- Man's wrath (2 Tim 3:12)
- Satan's wrath (Eph 6:11-12)
- World's wrath (John 15:18-19)

Escapism

es-cap-ism /ɪ'skeɪ.pɪ.zəm/

(n) The practice of avoiding an unpleasant reality or a difficult or boring situation by distracting the mind towards daydreaming or other activities of entertainment

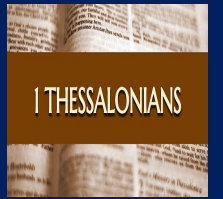
Conclusion

Five General Comments (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

1. Not the first mention of The Rapture
2. “Rapture” comes from the Latin
3. The Rapture is distinct from the Second Advent
4. Only for the Church Age believer
5. Pre-tribulationism is the correct view



Structure



■ Personal (1–3)

- ◆ Genuine conversion (1)
- ◆ Impure motives (2:1-16)
- ◆ Lack of concern (2:17–3:13)

■ Practical (4–5)

- ◆ Immorality (4:1-8)
- ◆ Laziness (4:9-12)
- ◆ Eschatology (4:13–5:11)
- ◆ Ministry imbalances (5:12-15)
- ◆ Progressive sanctification (5:16-28)