

Dispensational Distinctions in Eschatology

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Duluth Bible Church Conference 2012



Preview

I. Value of Studying Prophecy



II. The Proper Future Place of Israel

III. The Blessed Hope

IV. The Reality of the Judgment Seat of Christ

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Definition of Prophecy

- History in advance
- Two kinds of prophecy
 - Near: 1 Sam 28:16-19; Isa 44:28–45:1; Jer 25:11; Dan 5:25-30; Matt 26:23-25, 34; Acts 21:10-11
 - Far: Rev 4–22; eschatology



Definition

- Prophecy
- Eschatology
- More than the Book of Revelation



Importance

- God's glory
- Amount of Scripture
- Impact on daily life (1 John 3:2-3; 2 Pet 3:11; Titus 2:13)



Why Study Prophecy/Eschatology?

- Comforts (John 14:1; 1 Thess 4:18)
- Calms (Titus 2:13)
- Converts (Acts 17:2-3, 31, 34)
- Cleanses (2 Pet 3:14; 1 John 3:2-3)
- Compels (2 Cor 5:10-11, 14)
- Clarifies (future for church, Israel, unbelievers, nations, angels, Satan)



Adapted from Zuck, *Basics of Biblical Interpretation*, 228-30

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Abrahamic Covenant



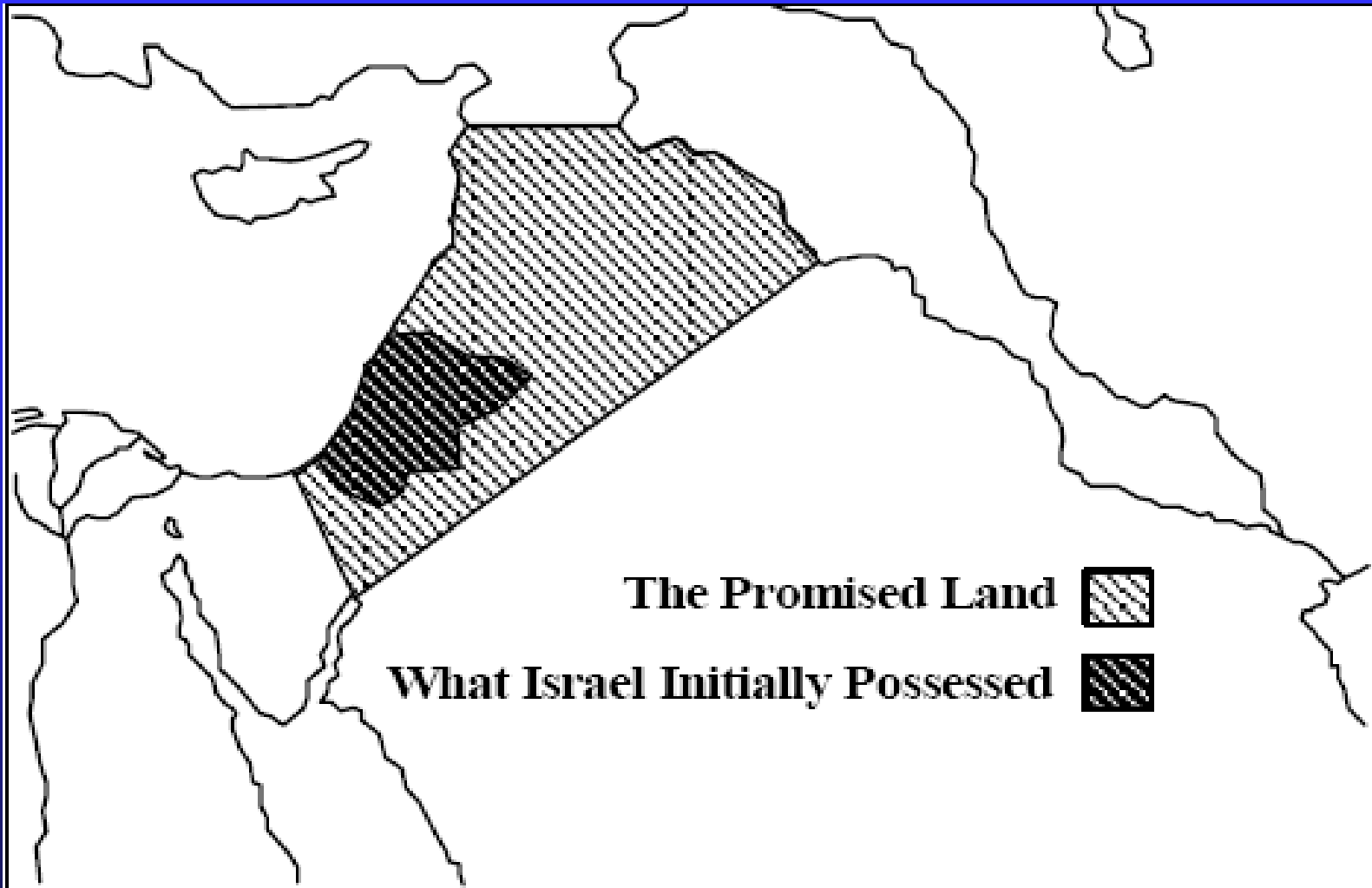
Unconditional covenant with a conditional blessing (Deut. 28; Lev. 26)

Evidence of Abrahamic Covenant's Unconditional Nature

- ANE covenant ratification ceremony (Gen 15)
- No stated conditions for Israel's obedience (Gen 15)
- Covenant's eternality (Gen 17:7, 13, 19)
- Covenant's immutability (Heb 6:13-18)
- Trans-generational reaffirmation despite perpetual national disobedience (Jer. 31:35-37)

Land Promises Fulfilled in the Time of Joshua or Solomon?

- Extended context *Josh 13:1-7*
- Land gained was a fraction of what was promised
Num. 34 vs. Gen. 15
- Jerusalem unconquered by Joshua *Josh 15:63*
- Forever? *Gen 17:8*
- Amos 9:11-15 Reaffirms land promises



Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Numbers*, p.99

Importance

- Basis of God's intervention in history (Exod 2:24; Ezek 36:22; Num 23:19; Heb 6:18)



Tactics Used to Dismiss the Future Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

A.	Argument	Answer
Joshua 11:23; 21:43-45	Already fulfilled; No future fulfillment	•Context (Josh 13:1-7) •Jerusalem Josh. 15:63

Tactics Used to Dismiss the Future Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

B.	Argument	Answer
1 Kings 4:21	Already fulfilled; No future fulfillment	territories not incorporated into Israel

Not one clear New Testament passage mentions the restoration of Israel as a political nation or predicts an earthly reign of Christ before His final appearing. None depicts the consummate glory of Christ as an earthly king ruling over the restored nation of Israel. The silence is deafening.

Waltke, Bruce. *Kingdom Promises As Spiritual, in Continuity in Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old Testament and New Testament*, p.273

Tactics Used to Dismiss the Future Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

C.	Argument	Answer
	Israel's restoration not mentioned in New Testament	Argument from silence; Land promises are never denied in NT

Tactics Used to Dismiss the Future Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

D.	Argument	Answer
	Kingdom taken from Israel and given to Church (Matt.21:43)	Kingdom given to future believing Jewish nation

Intercalation



- Unfulfilled program for Israel
- Israel's program is not being fulfilled now
- Present work of God in the Church Age is an interruption, interval, parenthesis, or an intercalation in God's past and future work with Israel
- Dispensational vs. Replacement Theology



Are The Biblical Covenants
Eternal?

YES!

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The Rapture

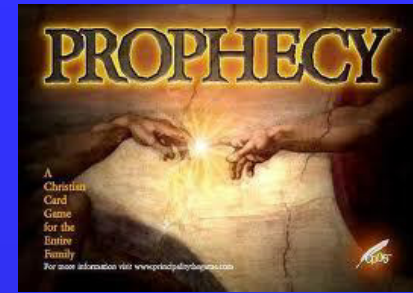
What and When?

Part 1

What is the Rapture?

- An important doctrine
- Distinct from the Second Advent
- Catching away of all living believers (1 Thess 4:17)
- Reunion (1 Thess 4:14-16)
- Resurrection (1 Cor 15:50-54)
- Exemption from death (1 Cor 15:51, 54-56)
- Instantaneous (1 Cor 15:52)
- Mystery (1 Cor 15:51)
- Imminent (1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:15)
- Traditional doctrine now being recovered

An Important Doctrine



- Thessalonians were new believers (1 Thess 1:9)
- Rapture (1 Thess 1:10) mentioned along with the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:5) and conversion (1 Thess 1:9)
- Rapture (1 Thess 4:13-17) mentioned along with sanctification (1 Thess 4:3; 5:23)

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 4:16-17)	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)

Catching Away of All Living Believers (1 Thess 4:17)



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

Reunion (1 Thess 4:14-16)

- Thessalonians' concern (1 Thess 4:13)
- Dead Christians resurrected first
- Alive Christians resurrected second
- Both deceased and living Christians are taken to be with the Lord
- Do not grieve as the world grieves (1 Thess 4:13)
- Be comforted (1 Thess 4:18)



Resurrection (1 Cor 15:50-52)

- Resurrection definition
- Resurrection importance (1 Cor 15:50, 53-54)
- Resurrection of living believers (1 Cor 15:51)
- Resurrection of deceased believers (1 Cor 15:52)



Exemption from Death (1 Cor 15:54-56)

- Enoch (Gen 5)
- Elijah (2 Kings 2)
- Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev 12:5)
- Philip (Acts 8:39)
- Paul (2 Cor 12:2, 4)
- John (Rev 4:1-2)
- Two witnesses (Rev 11)



Instantaneous (1 Cor 15:52)

- Twinkling of an eye
- Flash or moment
- Split second
- *Atomos* (Greek) = atom (English)



Mystery (1 Cor 15:51)

- Mystery definition
- Paul's assignment
- How church age will end
- Second coming taught in both the Old and New Testaments
- Rapture taught only in the New Testament



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)



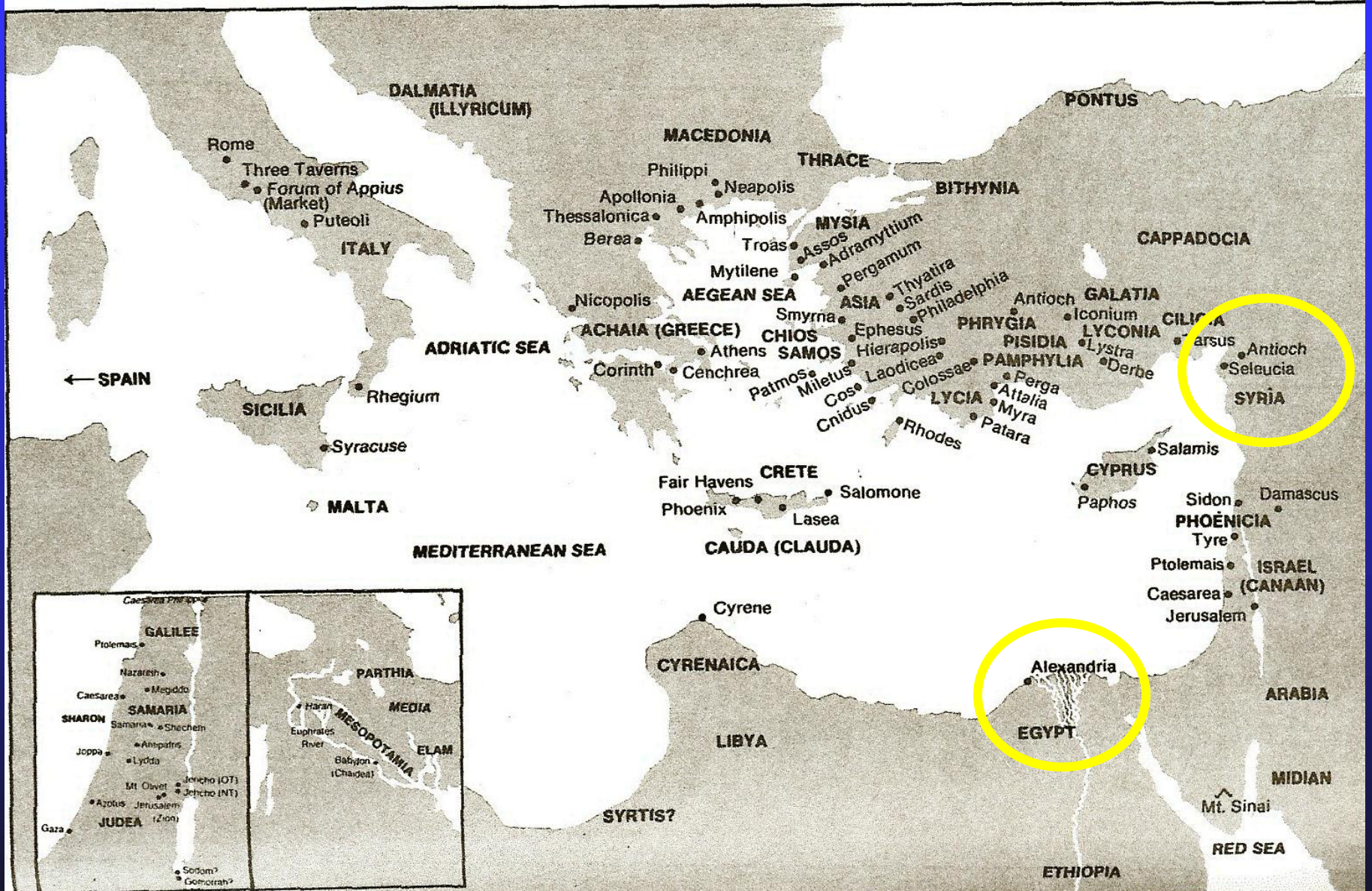
Traditional Doctrine Now Being Recovered

- *Sola scriptura*



- Negative influence of Augustine and Origen
- Pseudo Ephraem (4th-6th century A.D.)

Every Geographical Location in Acts/Epistles



Pseudo Ephraem (4th-6th century A.D.)

“Why therefore do we not reject every care of earthly actions and prepare ourselves for the meeting of the Lord Christ, so that he may draw us from the confusion, which overwhelms all the world...For all the saints and the elect of god are gathered, prior to the tribulation that is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sins.”

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The Rapture

What and When?

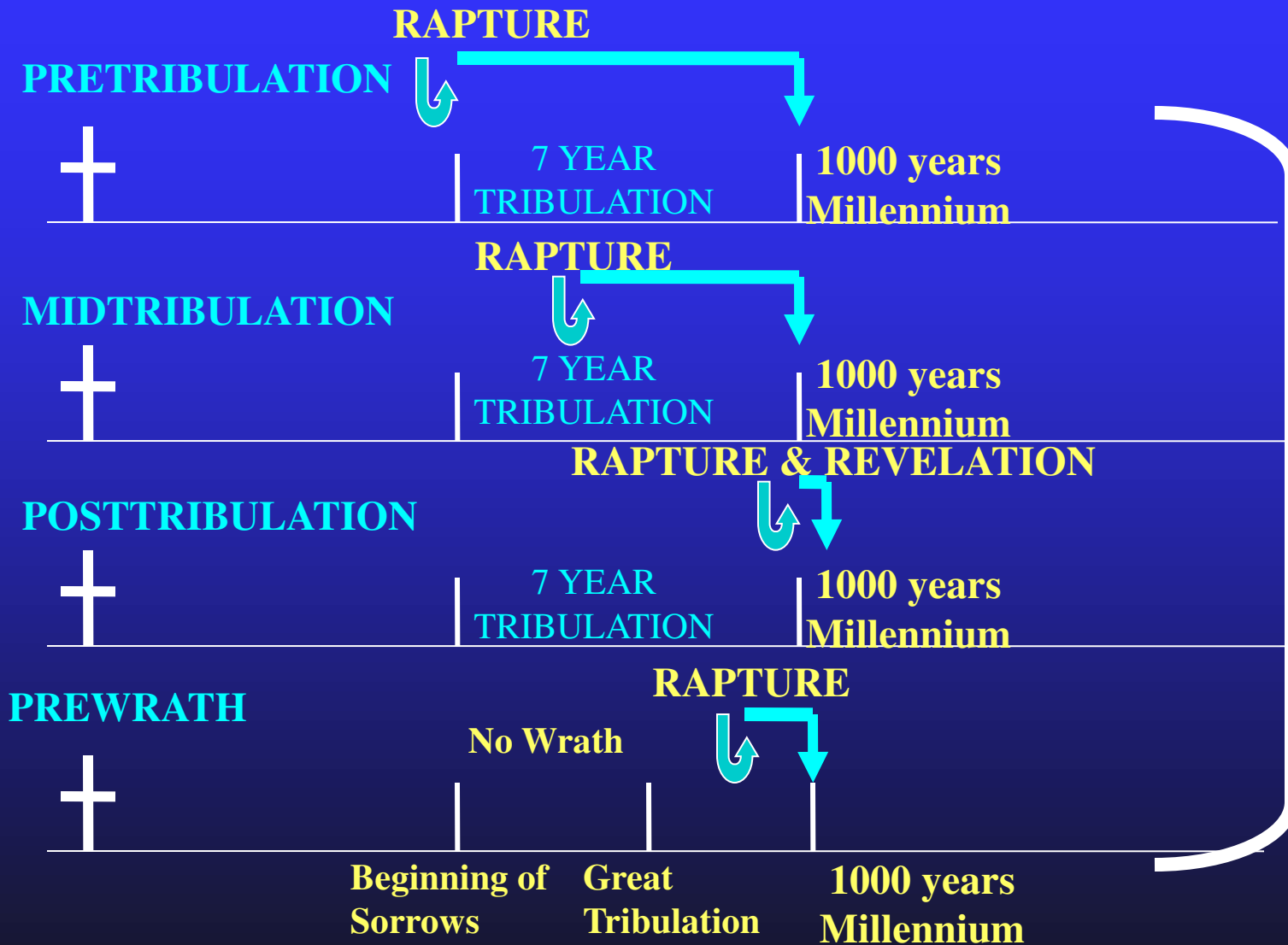
Part 2

When Will the Rapture Take Place Relative to the Tribulation Period?

- Pre-tribulation rapture theory
- Mid-tribulation rapture theory
- Post-tribulation rapture theory
- Pre-wrath rapture theory



RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISION



ETERNITY

When is the Rapture? Seven Arguments Favoring the Pre-Tribulation View

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

The Tribulation's Concerns Israel (Jer 30:7; Dan 9:24)



- Jer 30:7; Dan 9:24
- God uses Israel and the church on a mutually exclusive basis

The Missing Church

- Rev 4-19
- Rev 13:9
- Revelation's Jewish nature



Rev 1:19

- Seen (1)
- Are (2–3)
- After these things (4–22)



Promised Exemption from Divine Wrath

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



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)

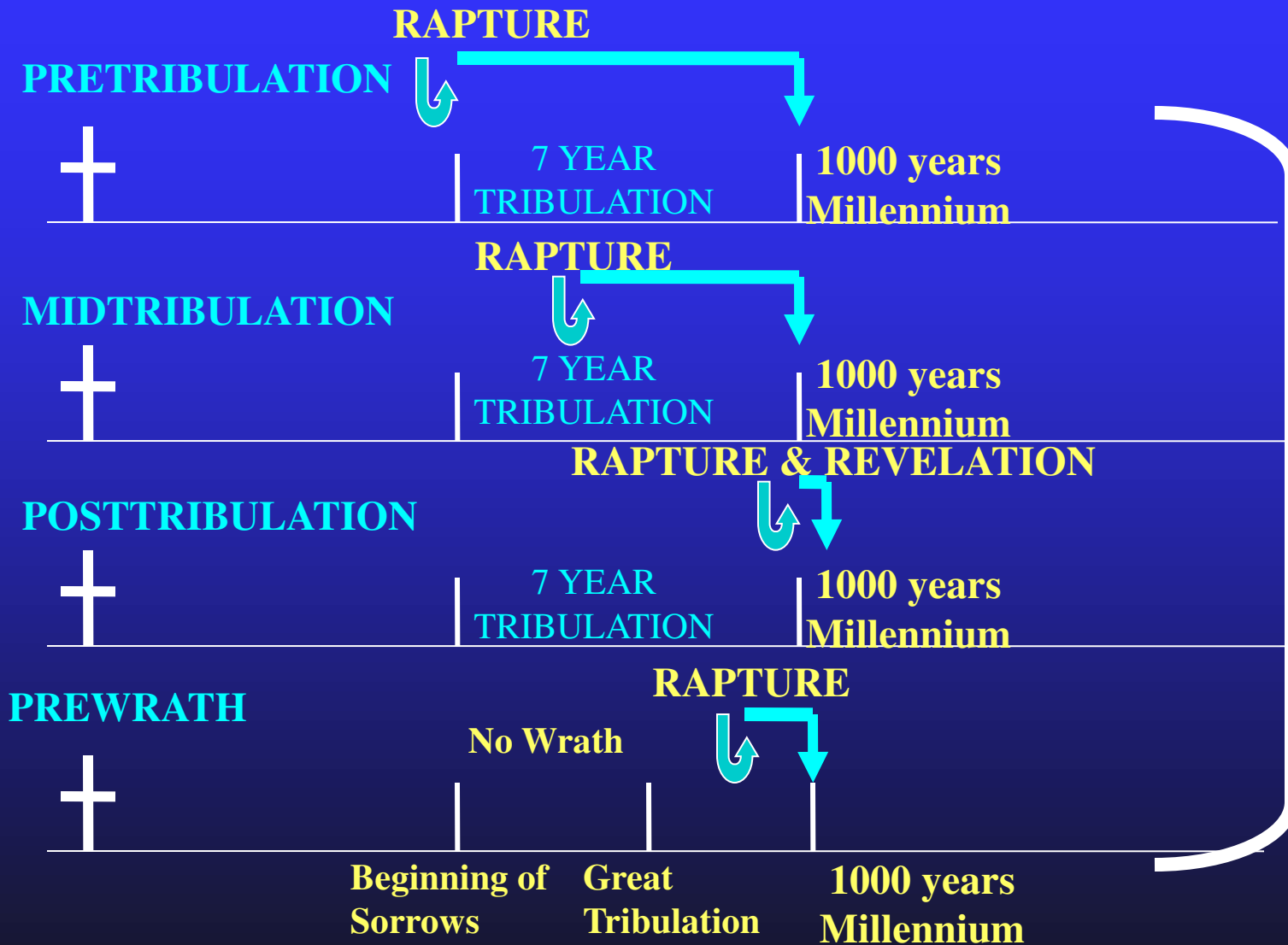


Imminence



- Imminency definition
- James 5:8; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:15; 1 Cor 1:7; 15:51; Philip 3:20
- Other rapture views deny imminence

RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISION



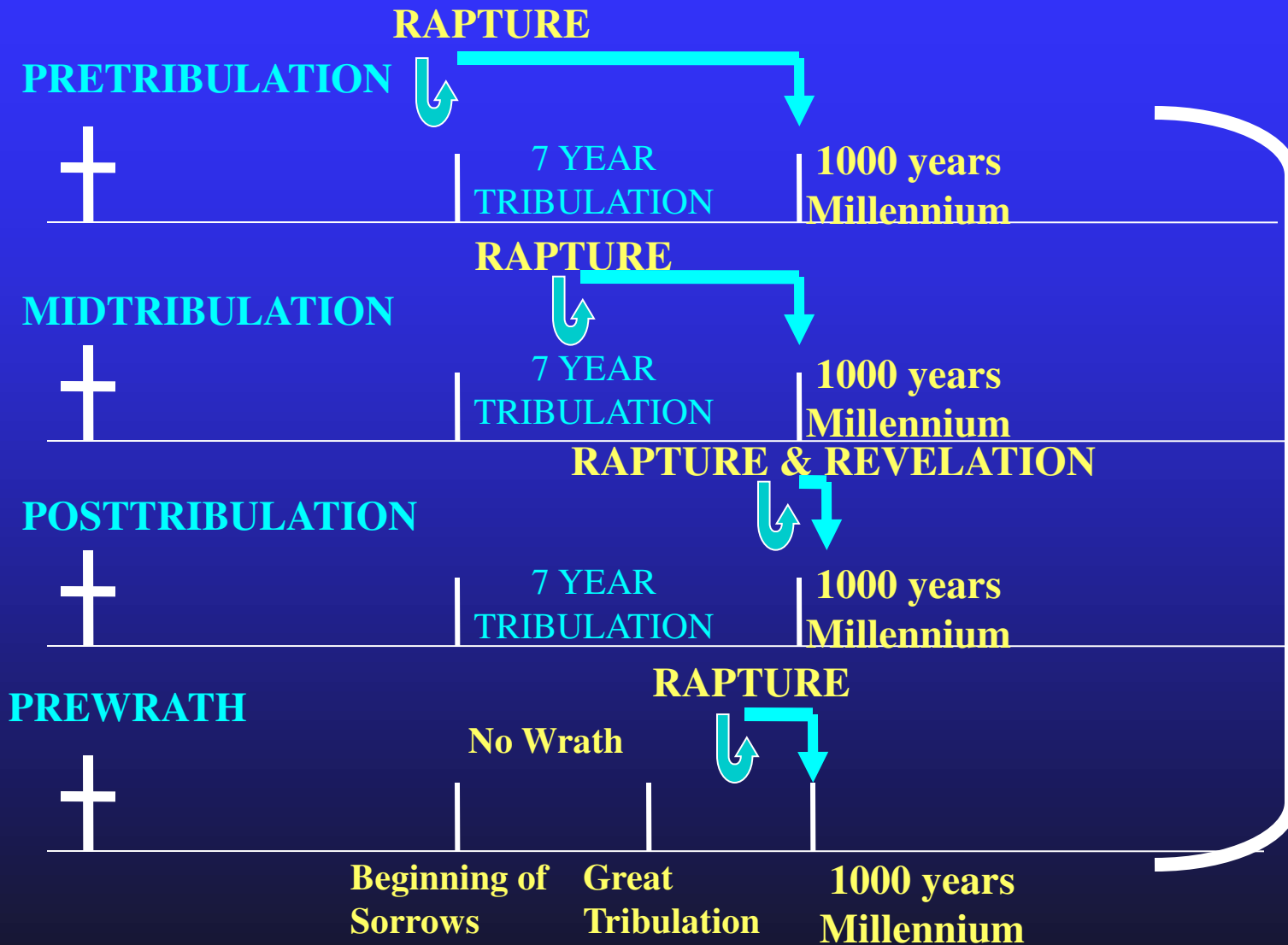
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Comfort



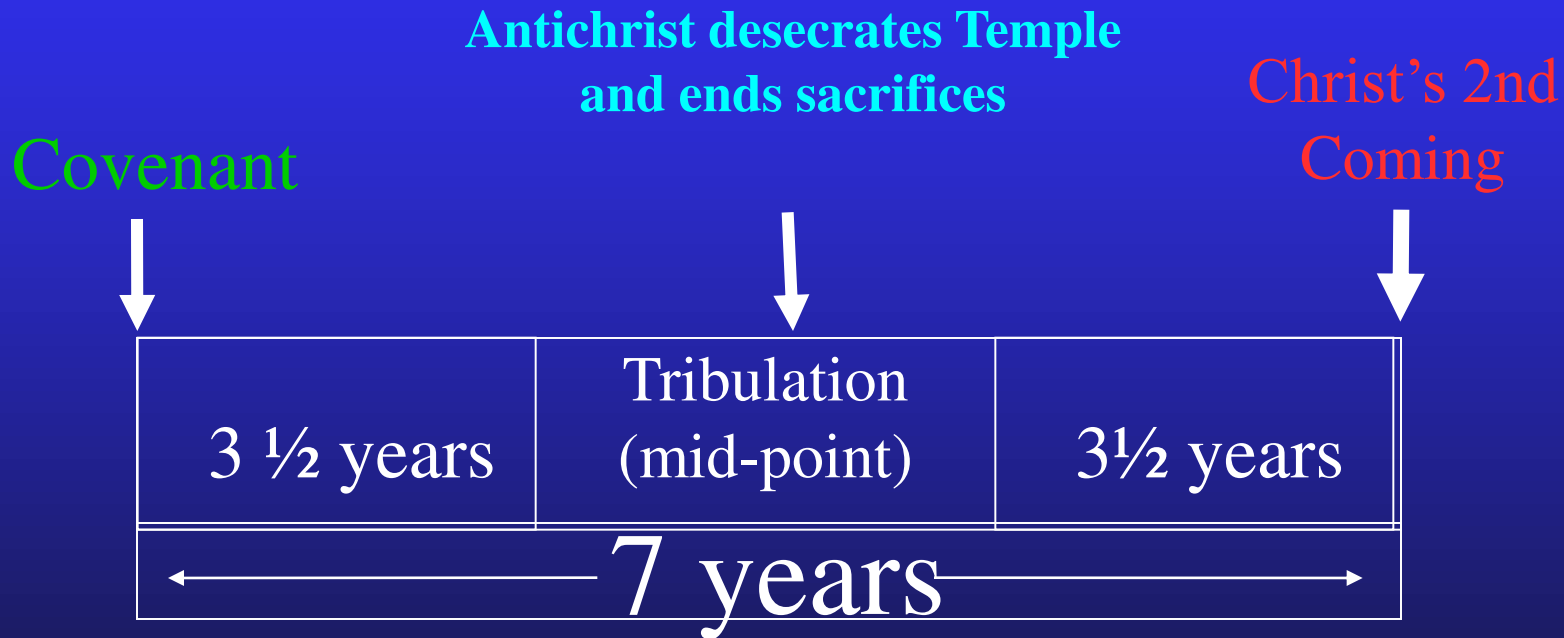
- John 14:1; 1 Thess 4:18; Titus 2:13
- Other rapture views are not comforting since they place the church into divine wrath

RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISION



ETERNITY

DAN 9:27 OVERVIEW OF TRIBULATION PERIOD



Restrainer Must First be Removed

- Restrainer holds back the Antichrist (2 Thess 2:6-7)
- Restrainer = the omnipotent Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:9)
- Holy Spirit indwells all Christians (John 14:16; Rom 8:9)
- Spirit indwelt Christians must first be removed prior to the Antichrist's advent

Symbolic Parallels

- 2 Peter 2:5-9



- Enoch taken before the flood (Gen 5:24)
- Noah protected before the flood (Gen 7:6-7)
- Lot taken before judgment upon Sodom (2 Pet 2:7; Gen 19:22)

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Six Questions

- When?
- Where?
- Who?
- Why?
- What?
- How?



When?

- After the Rapture
- Bride is already rewarded (Rev 19:8)
- Rewards are associated with the day of the Lord's coming for the church (1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim 4:8)



Where?

- In heaven
- 1 Thess 4:17



Who?

- All Church Age believers
- 2 Cor 5:10



Why?

- Not to judge sin (John 19:30)
- Not to determine salvation (John 5:24)
- But rather to give or not give rewards



Scripture's Four Judgments

Name	Sheep and Goat	Judgment of the Jews	<u>Bema Seat</u>	Great White Throne
Scripture	Matt 25:31-46	Ezek 20:33-44	<u>1 Cor 3:10-15</u>	Rev 20:11-15
Place	Earth, Jerusalem	Earth, wilderness	<u>Heaven</u>	Earth
Audience	Gentile Tribulation survivors	Jewish Tribulation survivors	<u>Church Age believers</u>	All unsaved
When	After Tribulation	After Tribulation	<u>After rapture</u>	After Millennium
Purpose	Saved Gentiles enter kingdom	Saved Jews enter kingdom	<u>Reward believers</u>	Degree of punishment in hell
Evaluation	Treatment of Christ's brethren	Passing under shepherd's rod	<u>Works taken through fire</u>	Not in the book; judged by books

Scripture's Five Crowns

(Rev 4:10: 3:11; 2 John 8)

<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
1 Cor 9:24-27	Incorruptible crown	Gaining mastery over the old man
1 Thess 2:19-20	Crown of rejoicing	Soul winning
Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10	Crown of life	Enduring trials
1 Pet 5:2-4	Crown of glory	Shepherding God's people
2 Tim 4:8	Crown of righteousness	Longing for His appearing

What?

- Athletic contest (1 Cor 9:24-27)
- Steward (1 Cor 4:2)
- Building (1 Cor 3:10-15)



The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential.

Samuel Hoyt, “The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective,” Part 2, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, electronic media.

How?



- Individually (Rom 14:12)
- Stewardship over time, talent, treasure (1 Cor 4:2)
- Motivation (1 Cor 4:5)
- Reliance upon divine grace or human enablement (John 15:1-8)

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- Where?
- Who?
- Why?
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