

# *Apostasy or Rapture?*

(2 Thessalonians 2:3A)

Awake to Israel 2019



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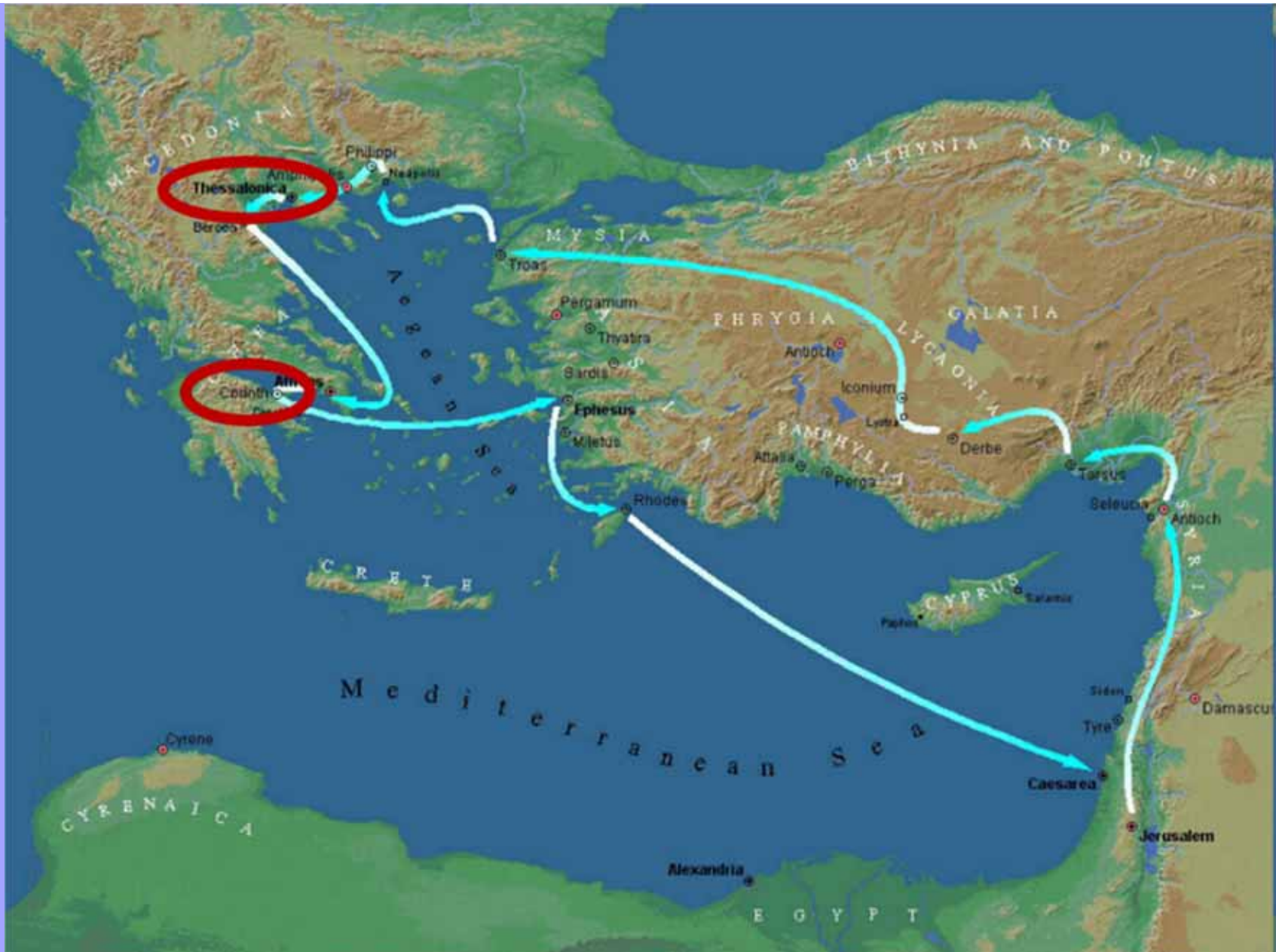
President – Chafer Theological Seminary



## 2 Thessalonians 2:3

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy [apostasia] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.”



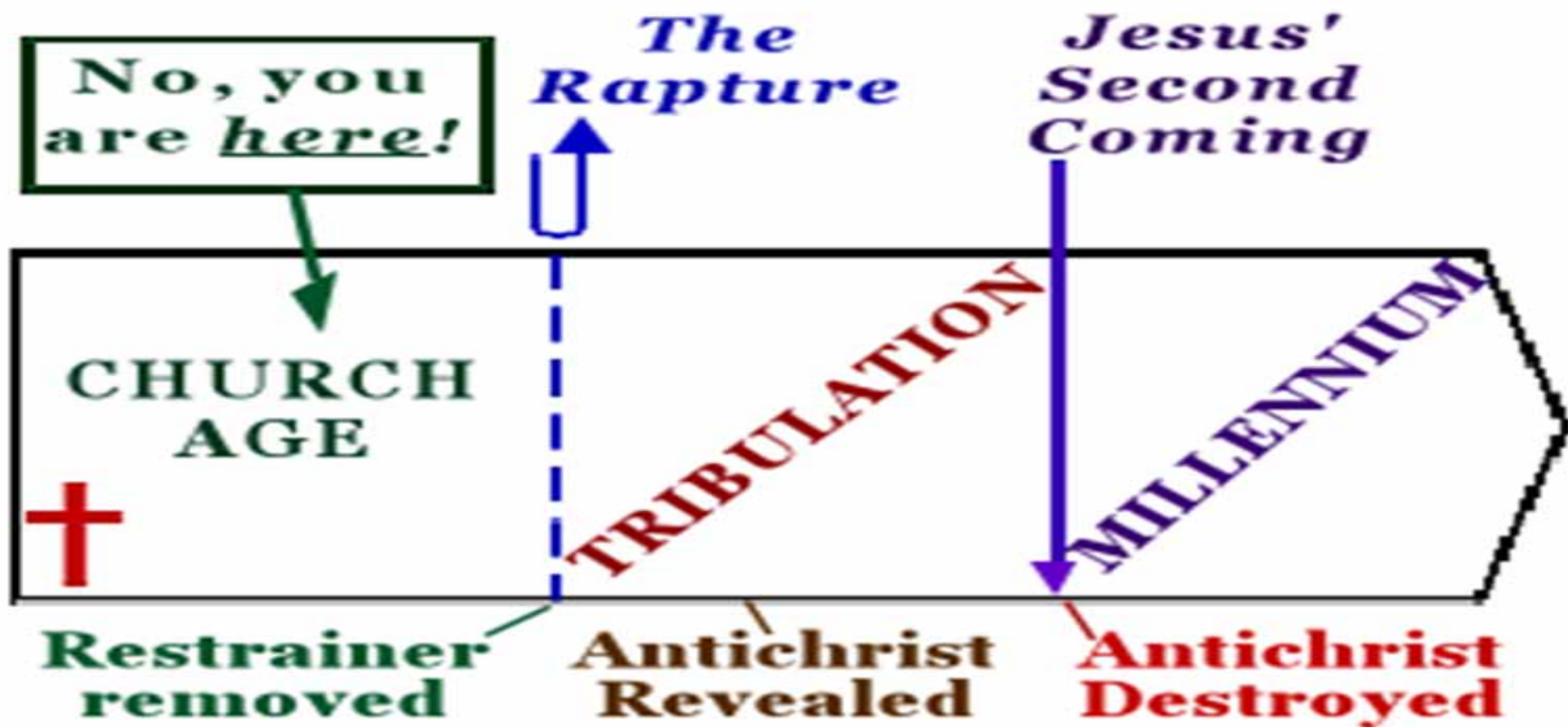


## 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

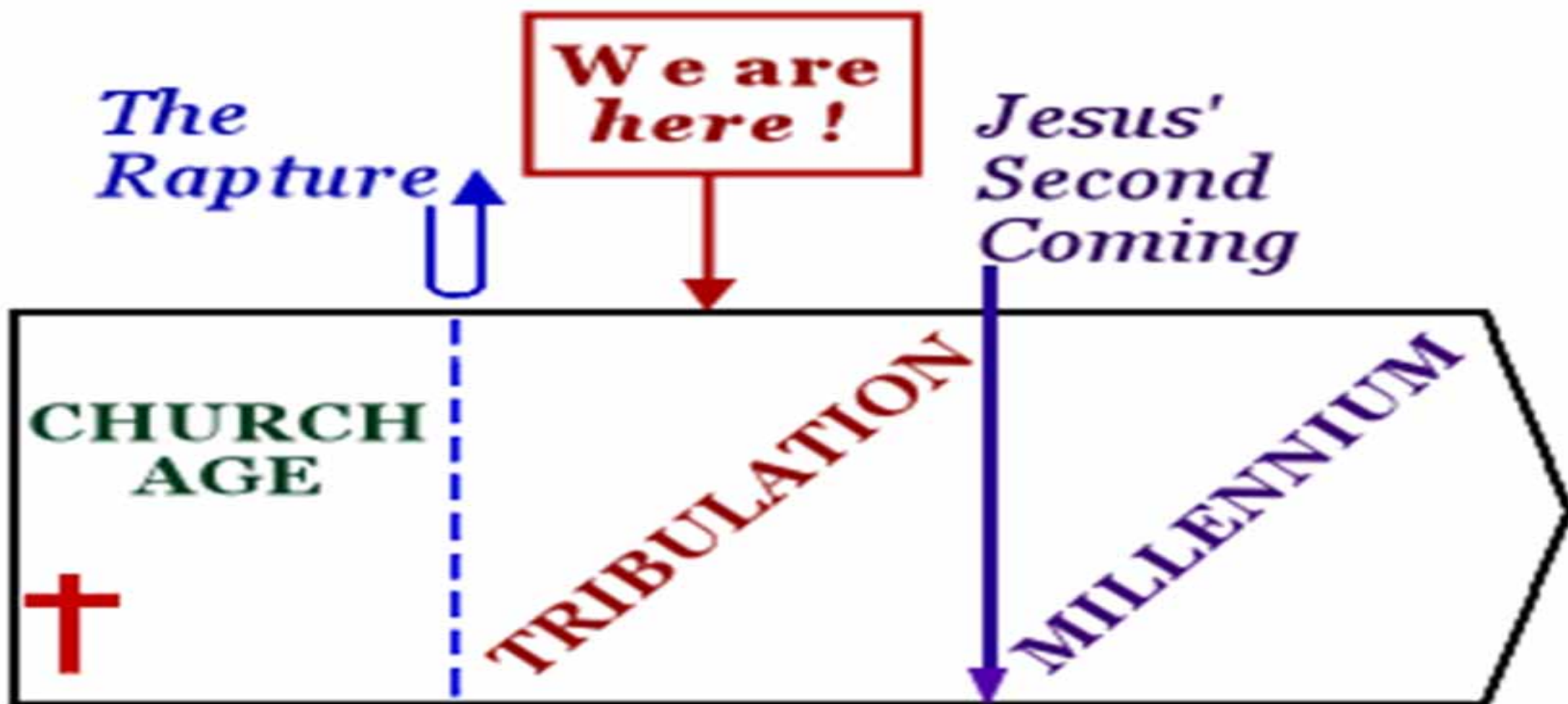
- **Problem (2:1-2)**
- Prerequisites for the Day of the Lord (2:3-12)
  - ◆ The apostasy (2:3a)
  - ◆ Advent of the lawless one (2:3b-4)
  - ◆ Removal of the restrainer (2:5-7)
  - ◆ Destruction of the lawless one (2:8-9)
  - ◆ Destruction of lawless one's followers (2:10-12)



# Paul's Correction of their Error



# The Thessalonians' False Idea



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## Apostasy? (2:3a)

- Spiritual departure (Acts 21:21) – Unbelieving world embracing the antichrist
- Physical departure (Acts 12:10; 2 Cor. 12:8) – Rapture



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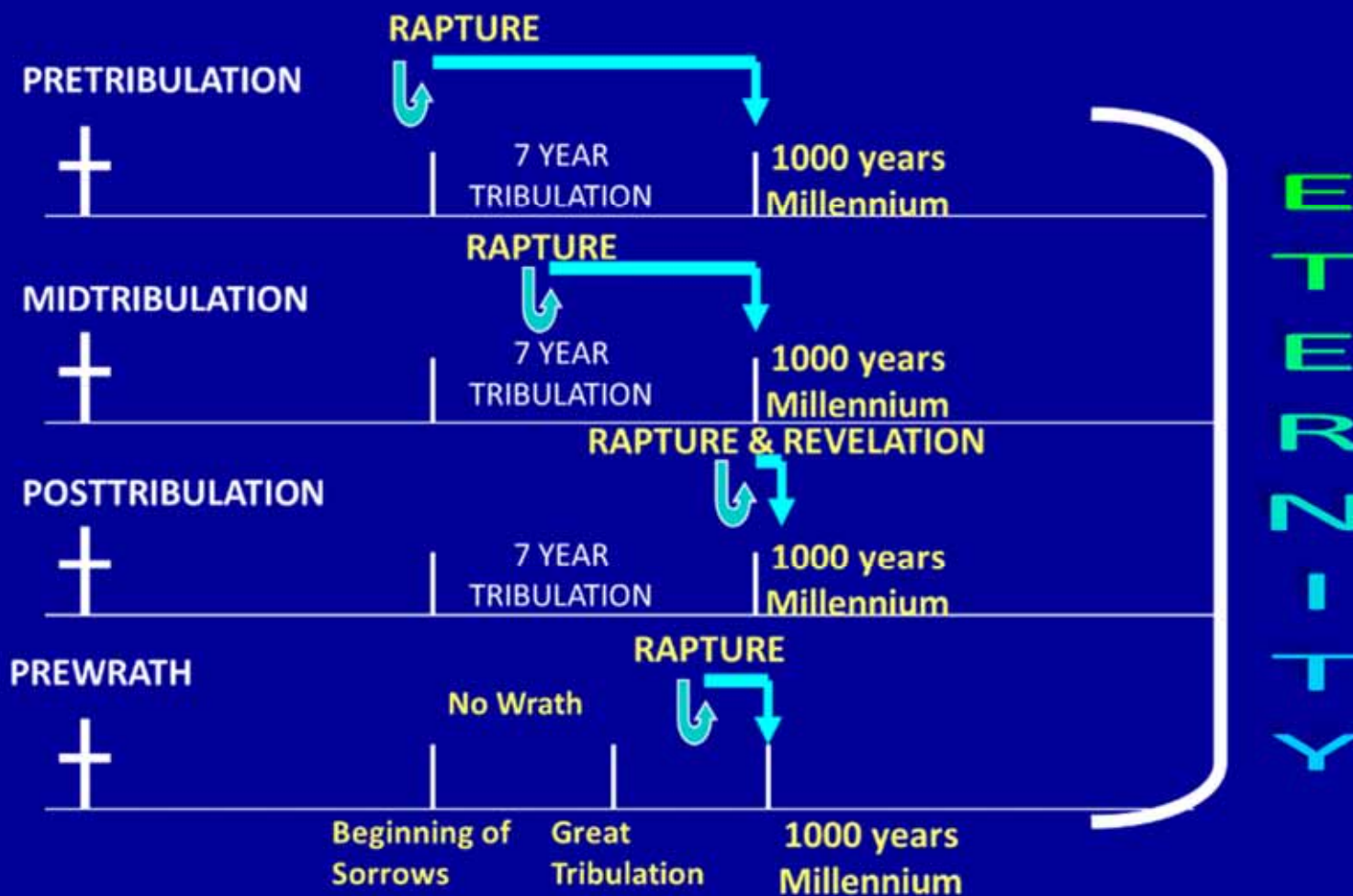
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# When Will the Rapture Take Place Relative to the Tribulation Period?

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

# RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISON



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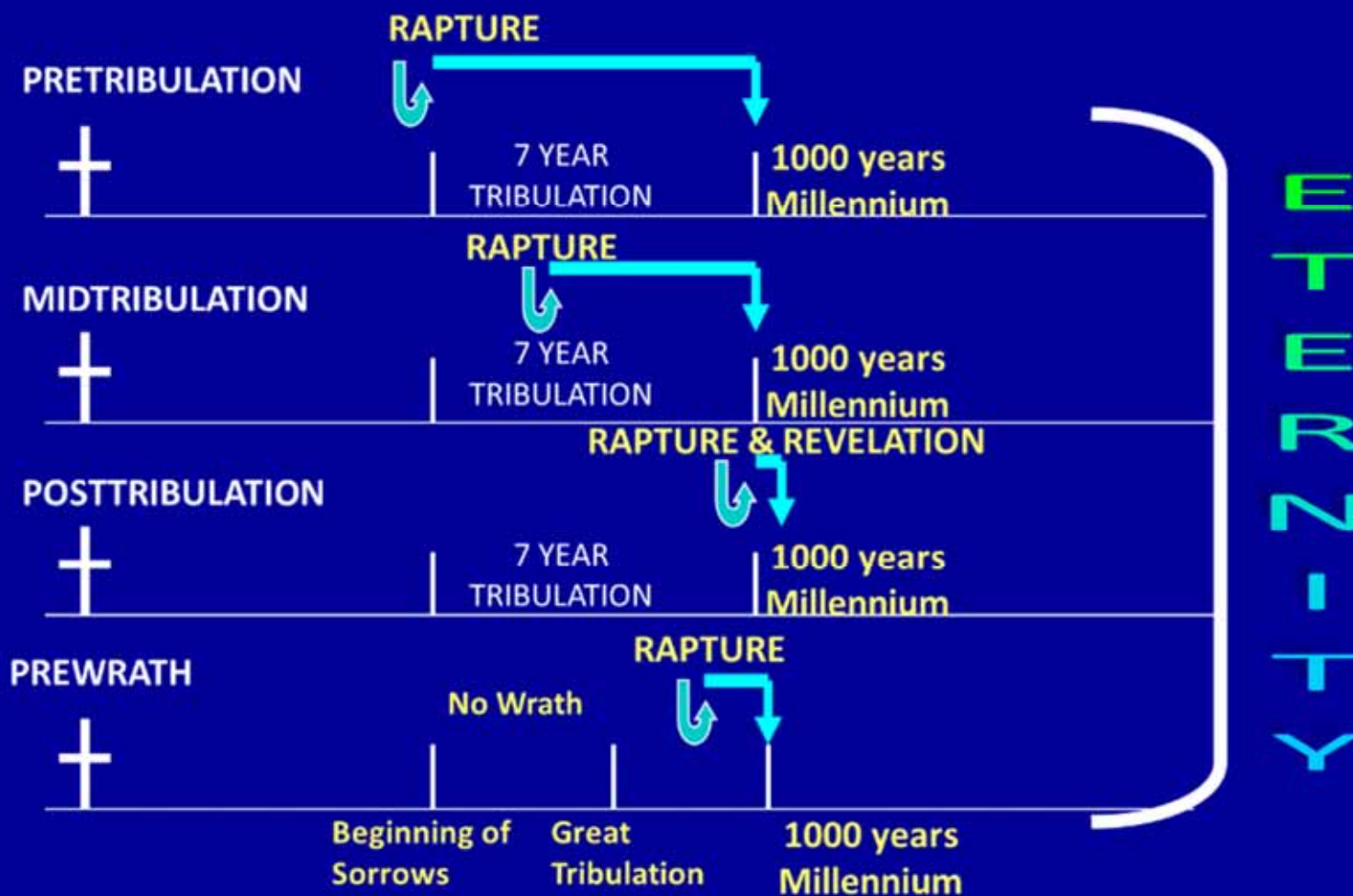


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# RAPTURE VIEW COMPARISON





# 10 Reasons Favoring Physical Departure

- I. There have always been doctrinal departures
- II. 2 Thess. was an early letter
- III. The definite article before *apostasia*
- IV. Noun *apostasia* can refer to physical departure
- V. Verb *aphistēmi* can refer to physical departure



# 10 Reasons Favoring Physical Departure

- VI. Extended context favors physical departure
- VII. Immediate context favors physical departure
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# Harvard University



“Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let everyone seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of Him (Prov. 2, 3). Everyone shall exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein.”

Rules of Harvard in 1636; quoted in David Barton, *Original Intent*, 81

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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)



# Unique Characteristics of 1-2 Thessalonians

- 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**

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# Entries for *Apostasia* in Liddell & Scott

- Rebellion against God
- Apostasy
- Departure
- Disappearance
- Distance



# Entries for *Apostasia* in Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*

- Revolt
- Defection
- Apostasy from paganism, Judaism, Christianity, orthodoxy
- Divorce
- Departure
- Standing aloof



## H. Wayne House

H. Wayne House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: Apostasy of Rapture?," in *When the Trumpet Sounds: Today's Foremost Authorities Speak out on End-Time Controversies*, ed. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 273.

“The noun form allows for *apostasia* as a simple departure in the classical period, proved by examples from Liddell and Scott...If one says that this is not important because the meaning is only classical or ancient and thus lost its meaning by the time of the New Testament, then I may turn to the same root meaning of *apostasia* in the patristic era immediately following the New Testament period, as indicated in the definitions for the noun form in Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Although the noun used in the sense of spatial departure is not the normal meaning...during New Testament times, the word is found with this meaning in time periods before and after the New Testament era, and it is likely to have been understood this way at least sometimes.”

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# New Testament Meanings of *Aphistēmi*

- 15 New Testament uses
- Spiritual departure – Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12
- Physical departure – Luke 2:37; 4:13; 13:27; Acts 5:38; 12:10; 15:38; 19:9; 2 Cor. 12:8





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## George Gunn

John 14:1-3 – The Father’s House: Are We There Yet?, 30. [www.pre-trib.org](http://www.pre-trib.org)

“I ran out of ingredients for the salad, so I decided to make a quick run down to the store. While at the store, I left the car engine running while I made my purchase, thinking that I would be right out again. However, while I was in the store, I ran into my good friend Edward who was running for county supervisor. This resulted in my having to endure a somewhat long-winded rundown on how his campaign was running. Finally, fearing that my car would run out of gas, I ran with great haste out to the parking lot and returned home with the car surely running only on fumes.”

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## 2 Thessalonians 2:1

“Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.”



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## Restrainer? (2:6-7)

- Rome?
- Satan?
- Government?
- Michael?
- Spirit?



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- **Spirit?**

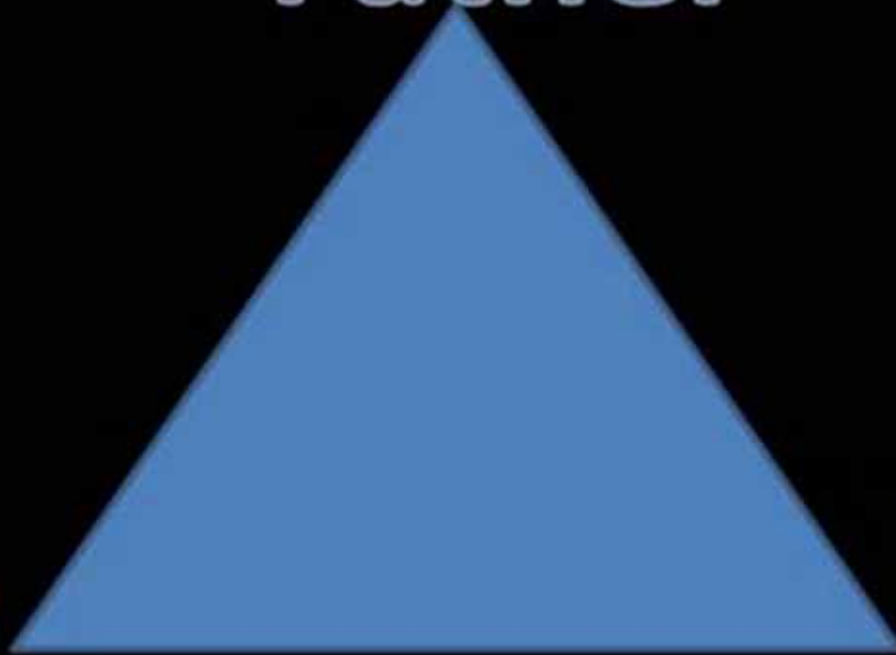


# Trinity

Father

Son

Holy  
Spirit



# Three Reasons Why the Restrainer is the Holy Spirit

(2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)

- The Holy Spirit is omnipotent
- The Holy Spirit is active in the world (Gen. 6:3; John 16:7-11)
- The Holy Spirit view handles well the switch in gender from the neuter (vs. 6) to the masculine (vs. 7)



## 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7

<sup>6</sup>And you know what restrains [*katechō; neuter*] him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. <sup>7</sup>For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains [*katechō; masculine*] will do so until he is taken out of the way.



## John 14:16-17

<sup>16</sup> I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you **forever**; <sup>17</sup> *that is* **the Spirit** of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be **in you**.



## 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 permanently indwells all Christians (John 14:16; Rom 8:9)
- Spirit indwelt Christians must first be removed prior to the Antichrist's advent

## Guessing the Identity of the Antichrist?

“We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist. But if it had been necessary to announce his name plainly at the present time, it would have been spoken by him who saw the apocalypse. For it was not seen long ago, but almost in our own time, at the end of the reign of Domitian.”

*Irenaeus Against Heresies 5.30.3*



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# Paul's Various Rapture Terms

- *parousia* (2 Thess. 2:1)
- *episynagōgē* (2 Thess. 2:1)
- *apokalypsis* (1 Cor. 1:7)
- *epiphaneia* (Titus 2:13)
- *rhyomai* (1 Thess. 1:10)
- *harpazō* (1 Thess. 4:17)
- *apostasia* (2 Thess. 2:3a)



## 2 Thessalonians 2:5

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



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## “Departing First” or “Falling Away”

Year	Bible	Translation
1384	Wycliffe Bible	Departynge First
1526	Tyndale Bible	Departynge First
1535	Coverdale Bible	Departynge First
1539	Crammer Bible	Departing First
1576	Breeches Bible	Departing First
1583	Beeza Bible	Departing First
1608	Geneva Bible	Departing First
1576	Rheims Bible	The Protestant Revolt
1611	King James V.	Falling Away

House, When the Trumpet Sounds, p. 270.

## Thomas Ice

Thomas Ice, "The 'Departure' in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,"  
online: [www.pre-trib.org](http://www.pre-trib.org), accessed 7 May 2017, 2.

"Most scholars say that no one knows the reason for the translation shift. However, a plausible theory has been put forth by Martin Butalla in his Master of Theology thesis produced at Dallas Theology Seminary in 1998. It appears that the Catholic translation into English from Jerome's Latin Vulgate known as the Rheims Bible (1576) was the first to break the translation trend. "*Apostasia* was revised from 'the departure' to 'the Protestant Revolt,'" explains Butalla. "Revolution is the terminology still in use today when Catholicism teaches the history of the Protestant Reformation. Under this guise, *apostasia* would refer to a departure of Protestants from the Catholic Church." The Catholic translators appear eager to engage in polemics against the Reformation by even allowing it to impact Bible translation."

# NKJV, NIV, RSV, ASV, JB, NASB

- “apostasy”
- “falling away”
- “revolt”
- “rejection”
- “rebellion”



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# Physical Departure Adherents

■ Kenneth Wuest

■ E. Schuyler English

■ J. Dwight Pentecost

■ H. Wayne House

■ Stanley Ellison

■ J.S. Mabie



■ Allen McRae

■ Gordon Lewis

■ Tim LaHaye

■ Thomas Ice

■ John. R. Rice

■ Paul Lee Tan

Conclusion

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