

The Rapture Debate in the Book of Revelation

8 Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα —^a ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἠνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλείσαι αὐτήν —^a οὐκ ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου. 9 ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου. 9 ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ Σατανᾶ, τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται.^b ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου, καὶ γνώσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε. 10 ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, καὶ γὰρ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. ἔρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὁ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεὶς λάβῃ τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι, καὶ γράψω ἐπὶ αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἣ καταβήσεται ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου τὸ καινόν. 13 ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

The Message to Laodicea

ἰ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γρά-
σει ὁ ἀμήν, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός,
ὁ κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ. 15 Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα,
ὅτι ψυχρὸς εἶ οὐτε ζεστός. ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢ ἢ
οὕτως, ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὐτε ζεστός οὐτε

Dr. Mike Stallard

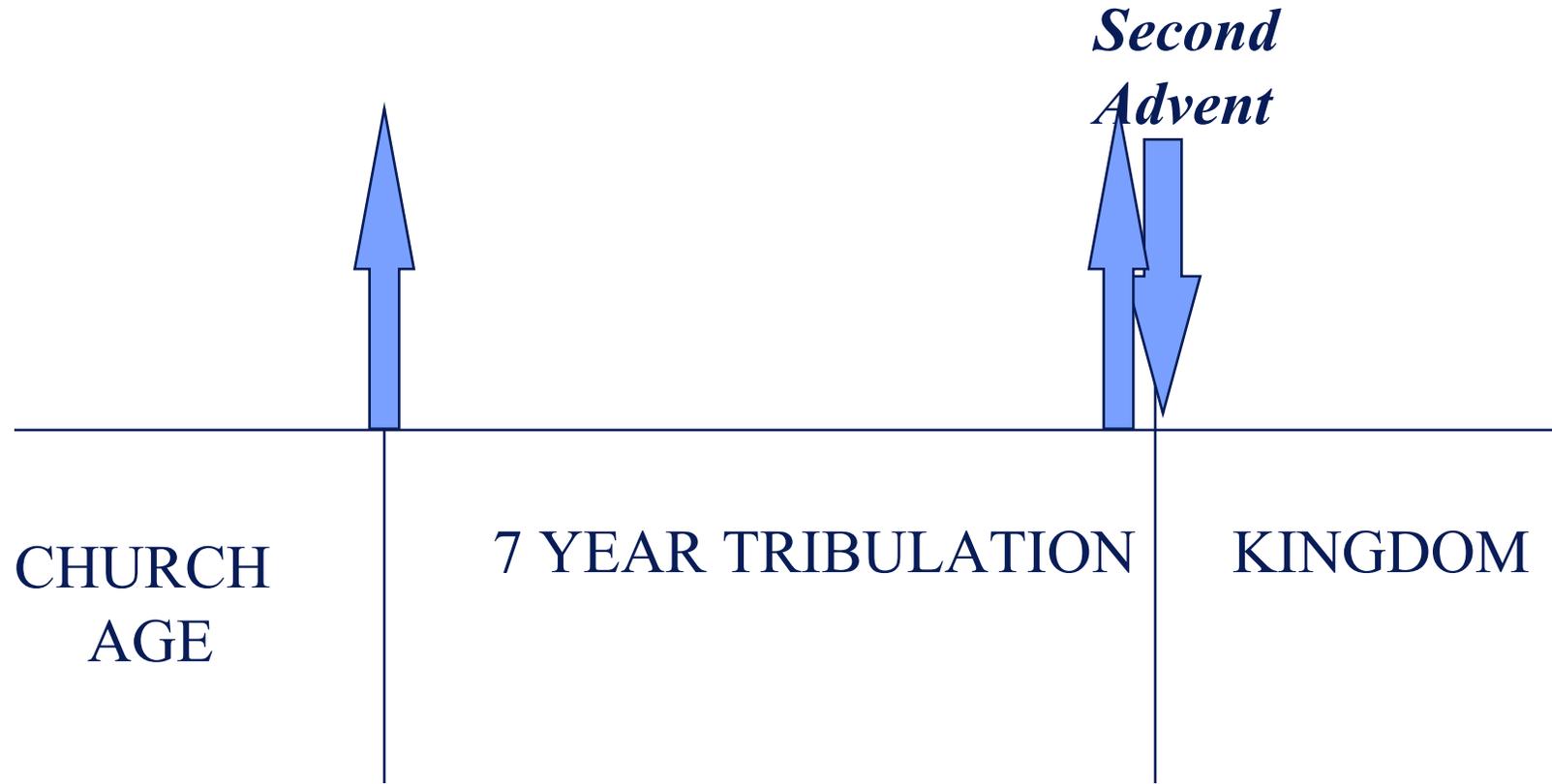
The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry

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RAPTURE VIEWS

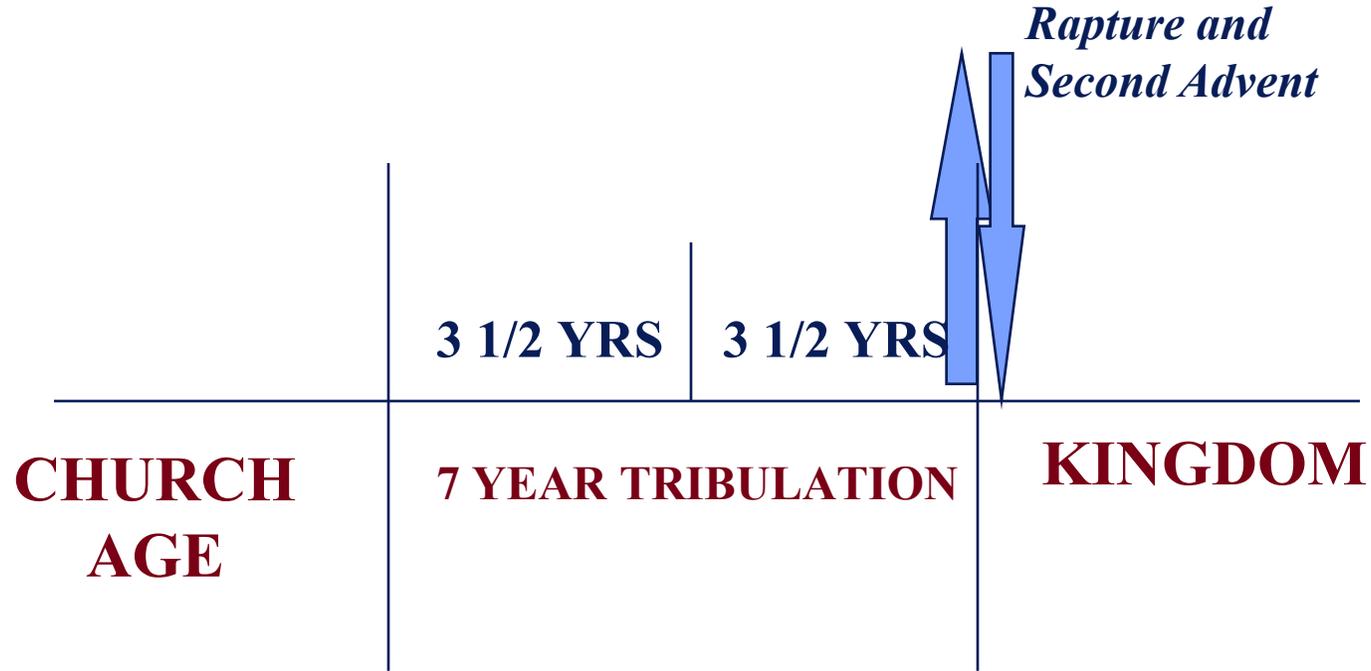
- **Partial Rapture**
- **Post-tribulational Rapture**
- **Pre-Wrath Rapture**
- **Mid-tribulational Rapture**
- **Pre-tribulational Rapture**

Several raptures of believers who are spiritual or “watching”



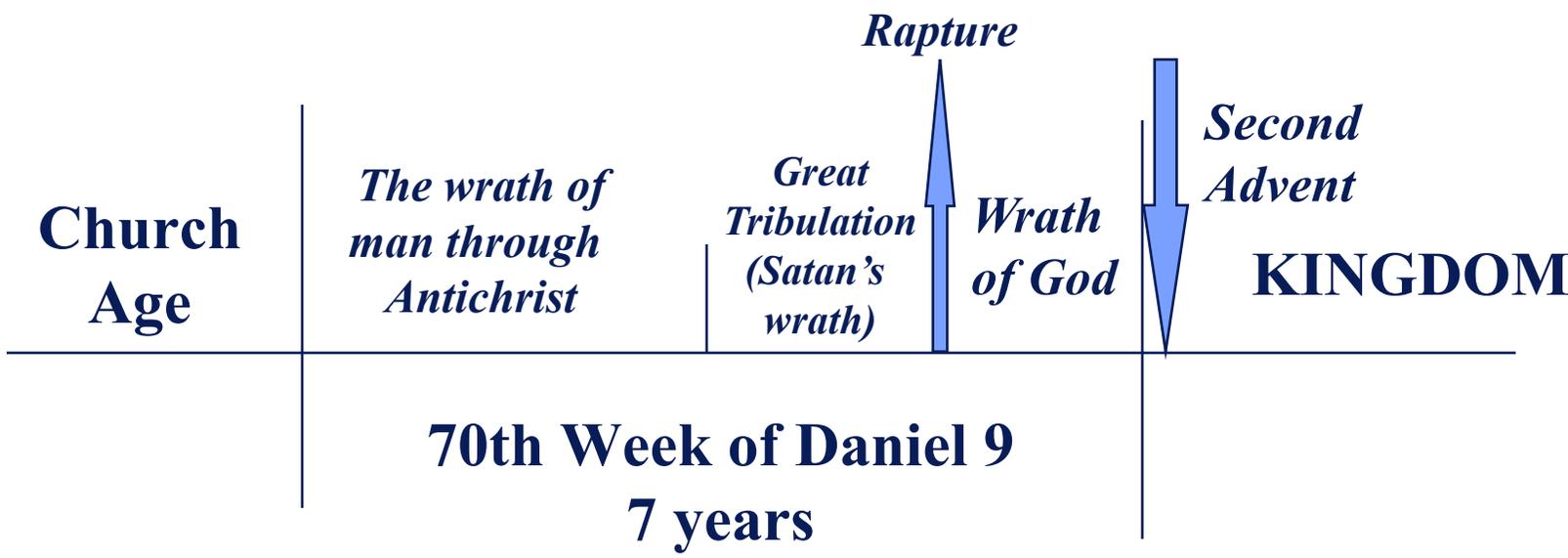
PARTIAL RAPTURE VIEW

The rapture of the Church takes place at the end of the seven year tribulation period. There is actually no two-phase Second Coming of Christ.



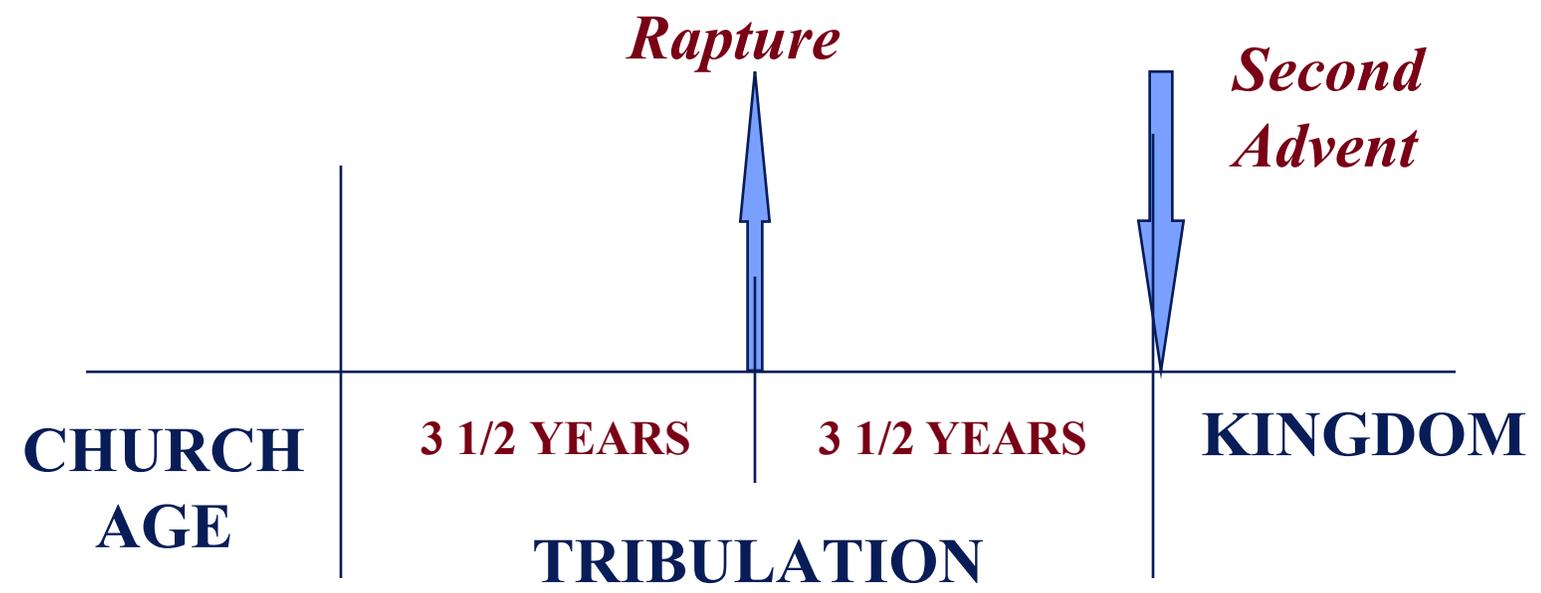
THE POST-TRIBULATIONAL VIEW OF THE RAPTURE

The rapture of the Church takes place immediately before the Day of the Lord (trumpet judgments of Revelation=wrath of God) about half-way through the last half of the 70th “week” of Daniel 9:24-27. That is, the rapture takes place about 3/4 of the way through the 7 years.



THE PRE-WRATH RAPTURE VIEW OF THE RAPTURE

The rapture of the Church will take place precisely half way through the 7 year tribulation period. The rapture takes place at the same time as the abomination of desolation (Mt. 24:15) and the breaking of the covenant with Israel by Antichrist.



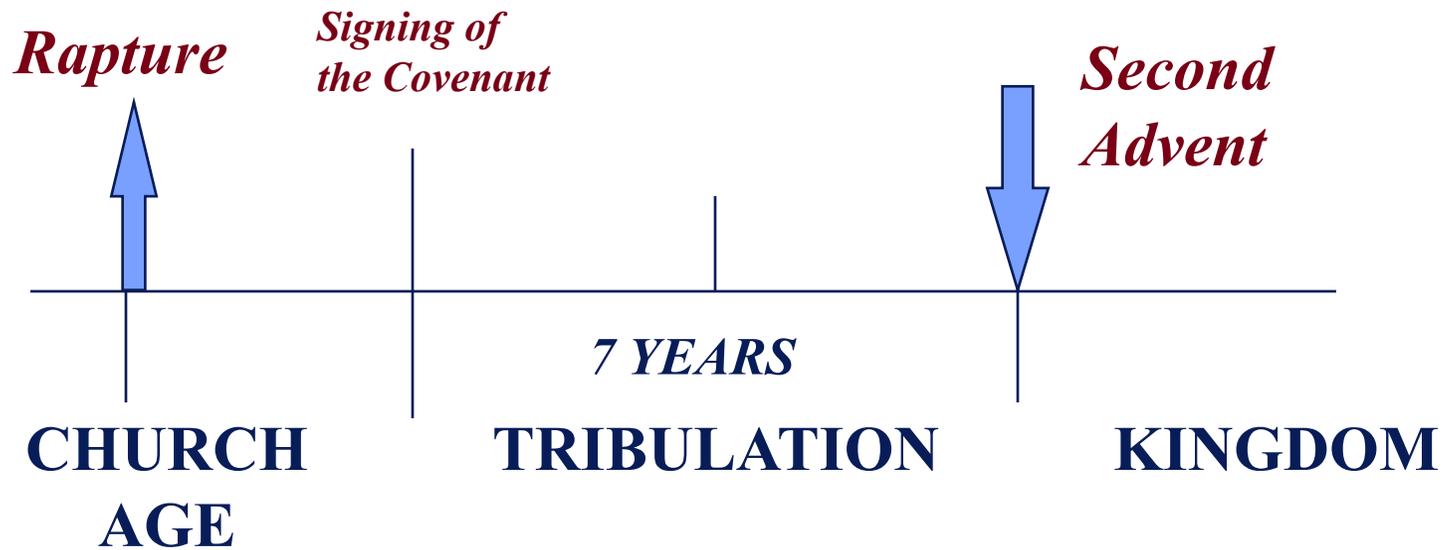
THE MID-TRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The rapture of the church takes place immediately prior to the 70th week of Daniel or the 7 year tribulation period.



PRE-TRIBULATIONAL VIEW OF THE RAPTURE
VIEW # 1: No gap between rapture and tribulation.

The rapture of the church occurs prior to the tribulation period but does not have to occur immediately before it. There may be a gap between the rapture and the start of the 70th week of Daniel.



PRE-TRIBULATIONAL VIEW OF THE RAPTURE
VIEW # 2: A Possible Gap Between Rapture and Tribulation

Areas Not to Be Covered...

- Proposed “types” of the rapture (e.g., Rev. 4:1, 11:12)
- **Theological arguments**
 - ✓ Distinction between Israel and the Church
 - ✓ **Imminence**
- The argument from the absence of the Church in chapters 4-19
- **The partial rapture view**

Areas to Be Covered...

- **Revelation 3:10**
- Selected prewrath and midtrib arguments from **Revelation 6**
- Mid-trib arguments from **Rev. 11 & 14**
- Post-trib view and **Rev. 19-20**

Revelation 3:10

κἀγώ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Can the time of testing be some localized tribulation for the Philadelphian church?

- Reasons for a worldwide future time of tribulation/testing
 1. Context -- The future tribulation begins in the next chapter
 2. The language is global involving the whole world not just the Philadelphia scene

Who are the recipients for the time of testing?

- The “earth-dwellers”
- This appears to be a technical term for unbelievers in the Apocalypse (see 8:13; 11:10; 13:12, 14)
- Does not rule out those who come to faith during the tribulation being forced to endure the time of testing

Can “keep from” be translated “guard through”?

- **A post-trib gambit**
- **Things to review**
 - ✓ **Lexical information**
 - ✓ **Argument from John 17:15**
 - ✓ **Problems with “guard through”**

Lexical Information

τηρέω

Keep

Preserve

Hold

Reserve

Watch

Guard

ἐκ

Out of

Out from

From

Of

With

By

.....

Through?

Argument from John 17:15

I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to **keep them from** (τηρήσης αὐτοὺς ἐκ) the evil *one*.

Problems with this view...

- It assumes that “keep from” in John 17:15 must be a reference to guarding or protecting since it is impossible to be removed from Satan’s influence & presence entirely
- **Two strategies for response:**
 1. Understand John 17:15 as kept from the realm or domain of Satan in an ultimate sense
 2. Note the differences between John 17:15 and Rev. 3:10

Differences (Robert Thomas)

1

In John 17:15 the protection is from evil, but in Rev. 3:10 it is from a period of time in which judgment will fall on the earth

2

In John 17:15 the disciples were already in the midst of evil, but in Rev. 3:10 the time of trouble is still future

3

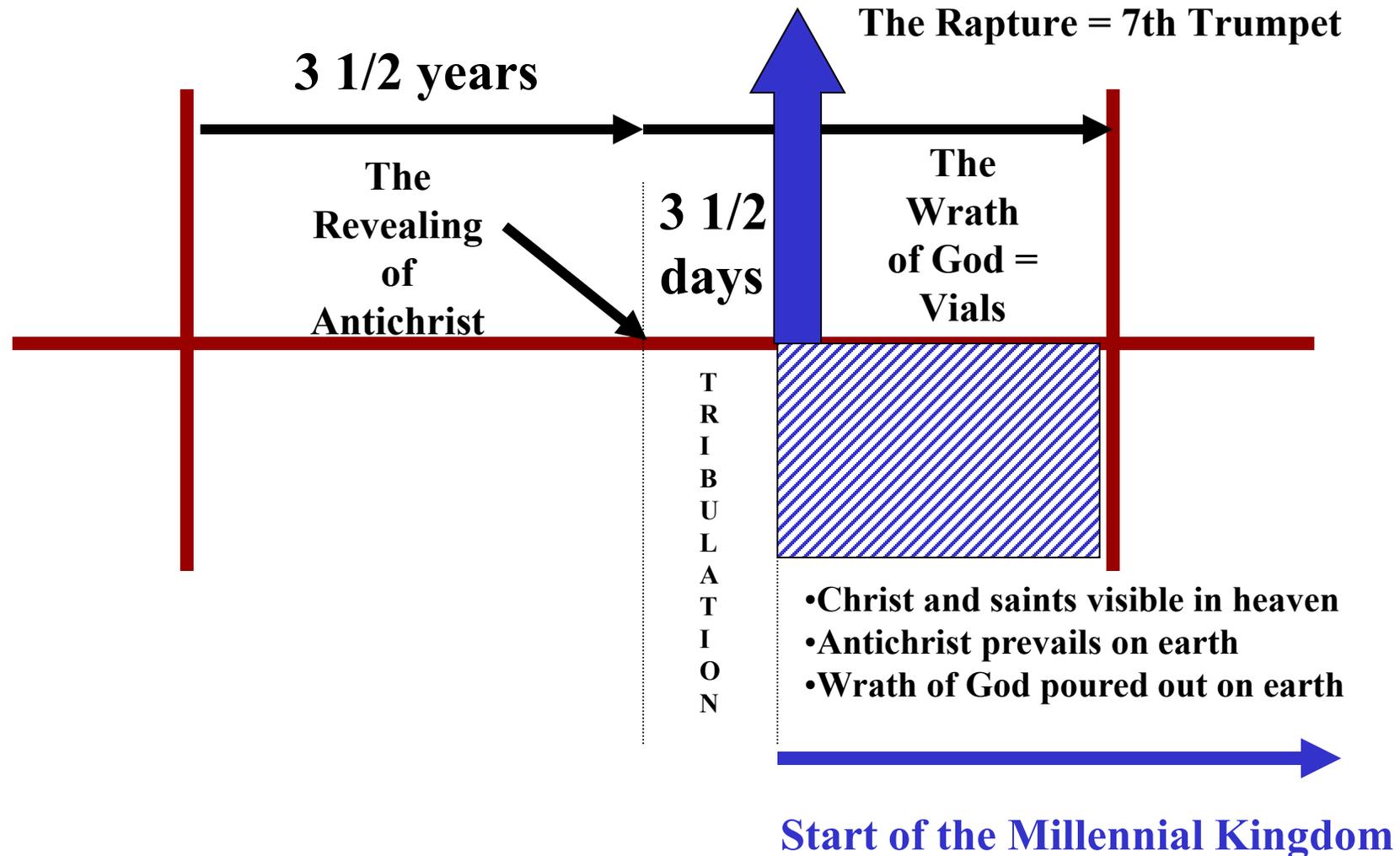
In John 17:15 the spiritual realm of the evil one (spiritual death) is in view [Same as the first view on previous slide]

Problems with “Guard Through”

- What is the content of “guard through” in the trib? How can you describe it?
 - ✓ Eternal security?
 - ✓ Protected from affliction?
 - ✓ Kept from death?
- How does the promise of exemption apply to the Philadelphians (original audience)?
 - ✓ If believers go through the tribulation, the passage is an empty promise to the church at Philadelphia

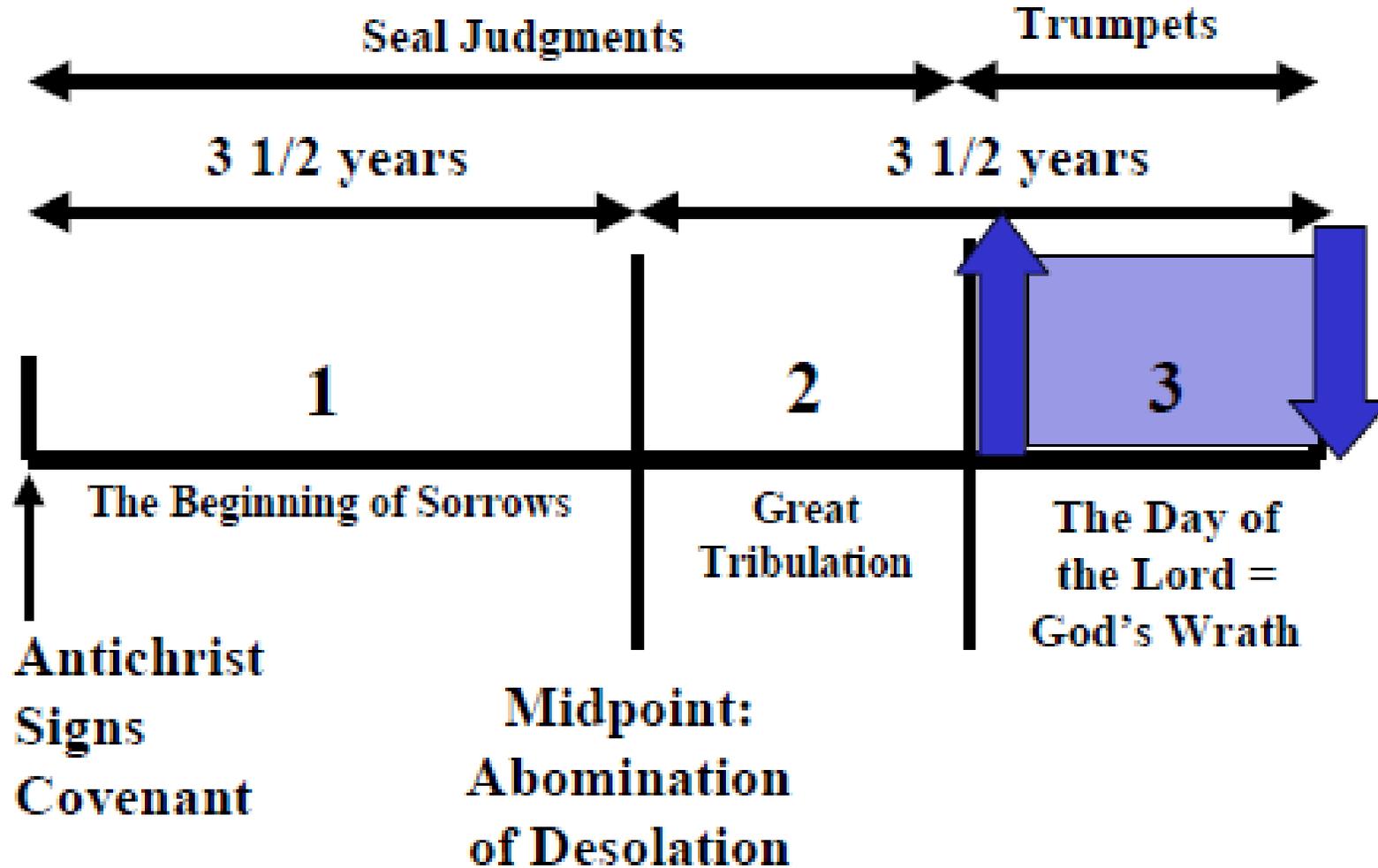
Prewrath & Mid-Trib Arguments from Rev 6

Buswell's View of the End Times: Daniel's 70th Week



PRE-WRATH RAPTURE

Daniel's 70th Week



Implication

Both the Prewrath view and the Mid-Trib view usually teach that **the seals in Revelation 6 are not the wrath of God.**

How do we respond?

1. Chapter 4 is part of the introduction to the tribulation period and is dominated by judgment imagery from the throne of God
2. All seven seals are broken by the Lamb (note chapter 5)
3. The Four Horsemen (first four seals) are introduced by the words of the four living creatures by the throne of God in heaven (6:1-7)

How do we respond?

4. The four plagues in the fourth seal (6:8) are described with language from Ezekiel 5:12, 17 & 14:21 which is clearly the wrath of God
5. People appear to be hiding already from the wrath of God (6:15-17)

Argument about Cosmic Signs in Rev. 6:12-14

- Both Rosenthal (prewrath) and Archer (mid-trib) appeal to this argument
- **Correlation**
 - ✓ Rev 6:12-14
 - ✓ **Joel 2:30-31**
 - ✓ Matt. 24:29

Responses

1. There are many cosmic signs in various eschatological passages that occur at different times (e.g., Isa. 13:10; Joel 2:30-31, 3:14-15; Eze. 32:7-8; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12-14, 8:12, 9:1-2, 16:8)
2. Moon like blood (Rev. 6:12) is not the same as “the moon will not give its light” (Matt. 24:29)

Responses

3. Some passages like Joel 2:10 cite cosmic signs which appear to be part of a duration of time and not an event like Matt. 24:29
4. If there is a gap between the rapture and the start of the tribulation, there is no bottleneck of events before the tribulation (especially see Joel 2:30-31)

Buswell – Rapture in Revelation 11:12

- Picture of the ascension of the Two Witnesses points to the **rapture** of the Church
- Correlates with the **last trumpet** in the book of Revelation which matches the “last trump” of 1 Cor. 15:52 and the trumpet of Matthew 24:31

Responses

- You cannot assume that the last trumpet in the book of Revelation is the last trumpet in biblical history
- The trumpet in Matt. 24:31 is post-tribulation and thus later in time than Buswell's last trumpet

Archer – Rapture in Rev. 14:14

- Believes that the 144,000 of 14:1-5 represents church saints
- The blessing of 14:13 suggests a positive end for the saints which may make what follows (v. 14) a potential rapture passage

RESPONSE

- The 144,000 are clearly Jewish based upon Rev. 7:5-8 and cannot represent all church saints
- Rev. 14:14 begins a section on the gathering of people for the wrath of God (see especially v. 19)

Post-Trib View and Revelation 19-20

- The description of the Second Coming in Rev. 19:11-16 coincides with the rapture
- The event following the associated judgments is the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20)

Response

- There is no rapture imagery in Revelation 19
- The immediate establishment of the kingdom on earth following the rapture contradicts John 14:1-3

CONCLUSION

The rapture of the Church is not the major point of the book of Revelation

However, the Apocalypse supports a pretribulational understanding of the timing of the rapture of the Church