

1 Thessalonians Series

Lesson #023

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Dean Bible Ministries

www.deanbibleministries.org

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Imminence of Christ's Coming

1 Thessalonians 1:10



1ST
THESSALONIANS

THEREFORE, COMFORT ONE
ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS

The Doctrine of the Imminency of Christ's Return

“Of a truth, soon and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, as the Scripture also bears witness, saying, ‘Speedily will He come, and will not tarry;’ and, ‘The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Holy One, for whom ye look.’ ”

~1 Clement

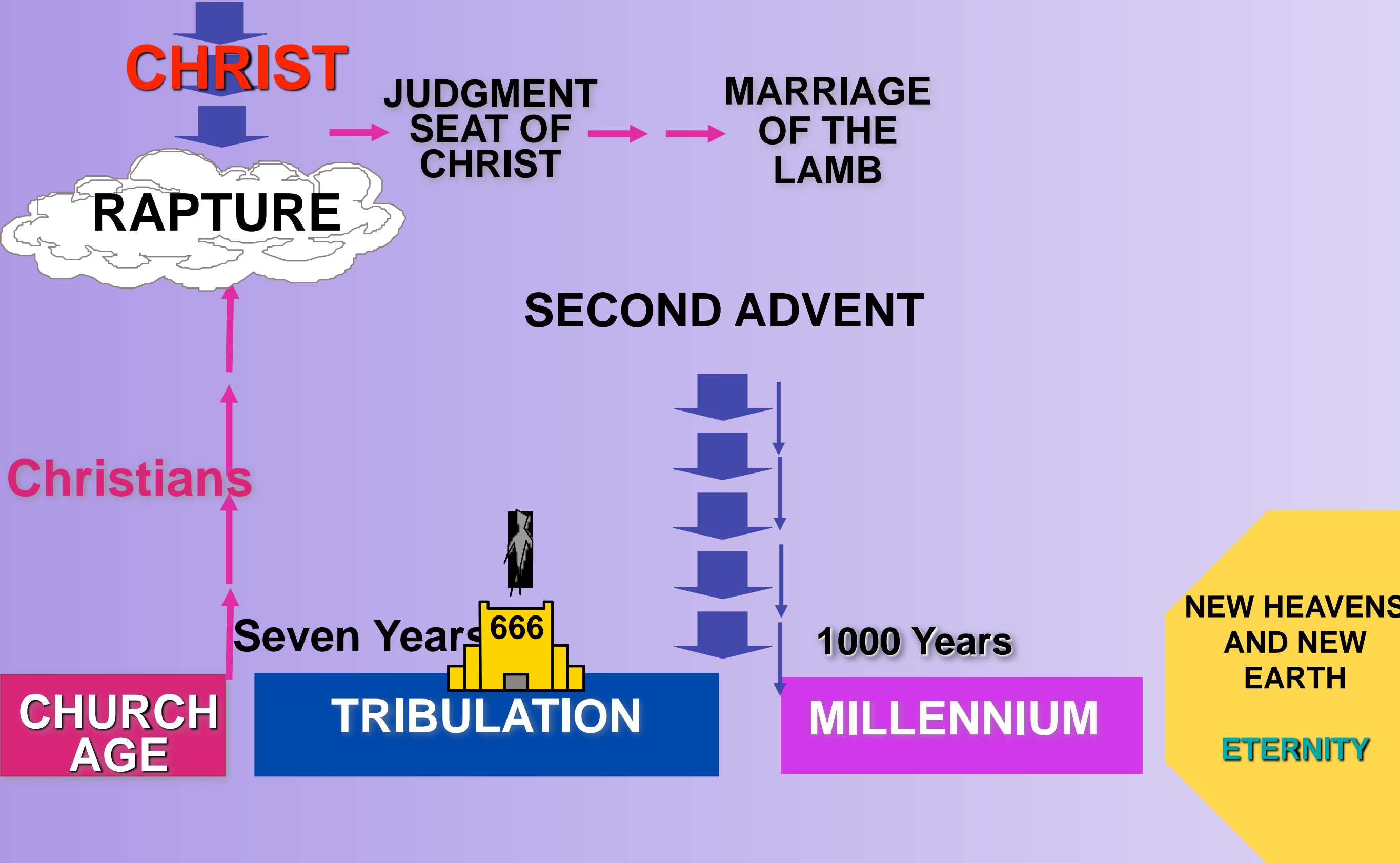
“The last times are come upon us. Let us therefore be of a reverent spirit, and fear the long-suffering of God, that it tend not to our condemnation. For let us either stand in awe of the wrath to come, or show regard for the grace which is at present displayed—one of two things.”

~Ignatius, *Ephesians 11*

“And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, ‘There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be.’ ”

~Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*

PROPHETIC PANORAMA



2 Tim. 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”

1. Definition

Imminency: the “at any moment” return of Jesus Christ.

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Imminency: the “at any moment” return of Jesus Christ.

OED: “hanging overhead, constantly ready to befall or overtake one; close at hand in its incidence.”

**It is certain it will occur,
it is uncertain when it will occur;**

It is NOT contingent on any other events;

**and NO prophesied event intervenes between the
present time and the Rapture.**

2. The doctrine of imminency is important to understanding the Pre-Tribulation return of Jesus Christ at the Rapture.

The Rapture is . . .

The resurrection of all dead Church Age believers and the removal of all living believers from the earth at the end of the Church Age before the Tribulation begins.

RAPTURE VIEWS

Pre-Trib Rapture



All Believers



CHURCH AGE

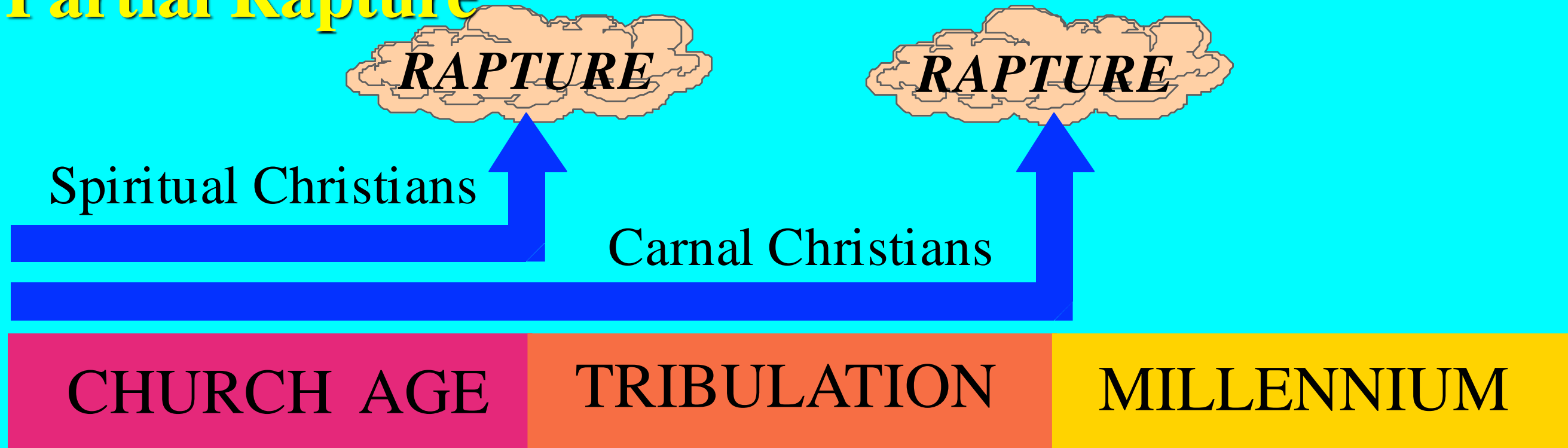
TRIBULATION

MILLENNIUM

The Rapture will occur before the Tribulation and will include all believers.

RAPTURE VIEWS

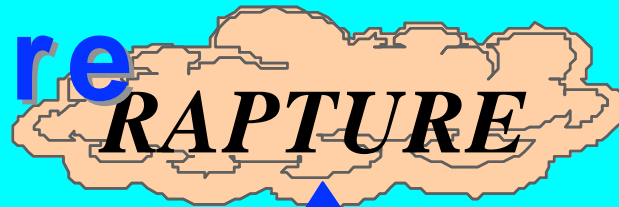
Partial Rapture



At the Rapture *only* those faithful, totally dedicated Christians will be caught up, leaving carnal Christians behind to be chastened by the tribulation.

RAPTURE VIEWS

Mid-Trib Rapture



All Believers



CHURCH AGE

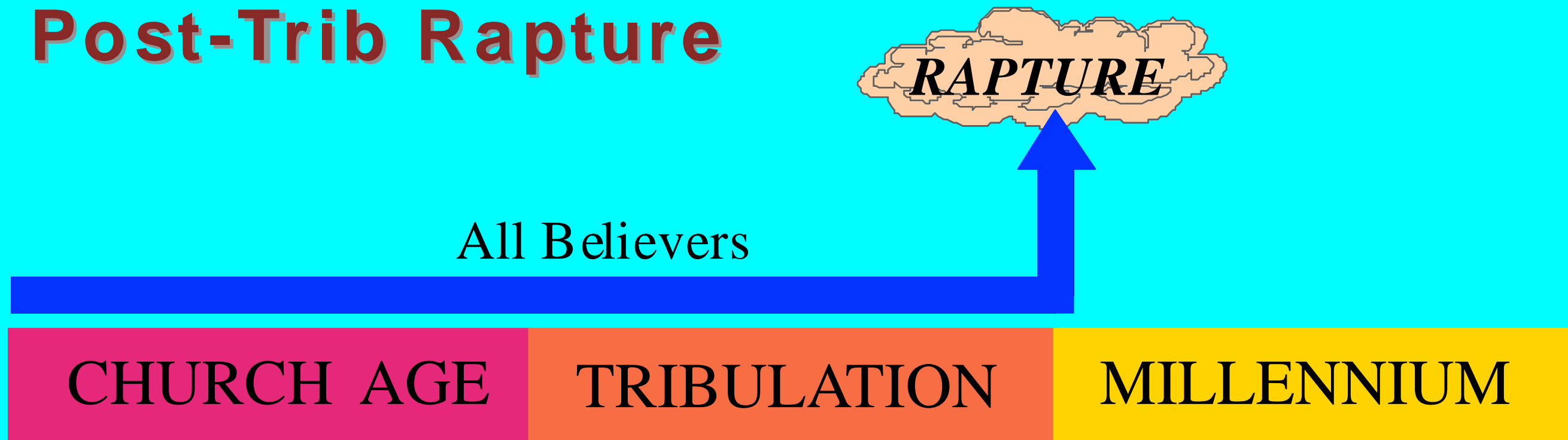
TRIBULATION

MILLENNIUM

The Rapture occurs in the middle of the Tribulation, thus believers endure the first half.

RAPTURE VIEWS

Post-Trib Rapture



The Rapture occurs at the end of the Tribulation, forcing all believers to endure the entire seven years.

4. The **purpose of the doctrine of imminency is to keep each believer in a constant state of expectancy, looking, waiting, watching, hoping for the return of Christ that we might be ready, prepared, that we might not be ashamed at His coming (1 John 2:28).**

5. Believers are to look for the blessed hope.

- a. We are to LOOK for the Savior,
Heb. 9:28; Titus 2:13**

- b. We are to WATCH for the Savior,
1 Thess. 5:6; Luke 12:37**

- c. We are to WAIT for the Savior,
1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:10**

6. No prophecy between the baptism of the Spirit and the Rapture means that the Rapture is imminent. It could occur at any time; no one knows the day or the hour.

7. The resurrection of the Church, like our dying, is completely out of our control. Just as we have no control over the time and manner of our death, so we have no control over the time and manner of the Rapture.

8. The resurrection of the Church is totally beyond our control because resurrection is the Lord's victory.

1 Cor. 15:57, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

**9. While the Rapture is imminent,
the Second Advent is not.**

Before the Second Advent occurs, there are many prophecies which must occur, e.g., the Rapture; the Tribulation; the antichrist; the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments; the Judgment Seat of Christ, Rev. 6–19.

10. The Rapture could have occurred at the time of James or Paul because no prophecy had to be fulfilled before the resurrection occurs.

11. Distortion of the imminency of the Rapture results in instability and foolish explanation or speculation about the time of the Rapture; hence, James gives us an admonition in James 5:7–8.

Key Passages:

2 Pet. 3:3, “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,

2 Pet. 3:4, “and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.’ ”

John 14:1, “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

John 14:2, “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.

John 14:3, “And 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.”

Rev. 22:12, “Behold, I am **coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”**

James 5:7, “Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

James 5:8, “You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is **at hand.”**

**James 5:9, “Do not complain,
brethren, against one another, that
you yourselves may not be judged;
behold, the Judge is **standing right
at the door.**”**

1 Thess. 1:10, “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1 Cor. 1:7, “so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

Phil. 3:20, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Phil. 3:21, “who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

1 Thess. 4:15, “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, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.”

Titus 2:13, “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;”

1 Cor. 16:22, “If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha.”

Phil. 4:5, “Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.”

“Be vigilant over your life; ‘let your lamps’ not be extinguished, or your loins ungirded, but be prepared, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come.”

~The Didache, 16. 1 (ca. A.D. 70 to 90)

“Be prepared to expect Him every day, or rather every moment.”

“As He has promised that He will return to us, we ought to hold ourselves prepared, at every moment to receive Him.”

~John Calvin

“Today we must be alert to grasp the imminent return of Christ.”

“... means by this [1 Thess. 4] to arouse the Thessalonians to wait for it, nay more, to hold all believers in suspense, that they may not promise themselves some particular time ... that believers might be prepared at all times.”

~John Calvin

“shake off all carnal security and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come.”

~The Westminster Confession, xxxiii, 3