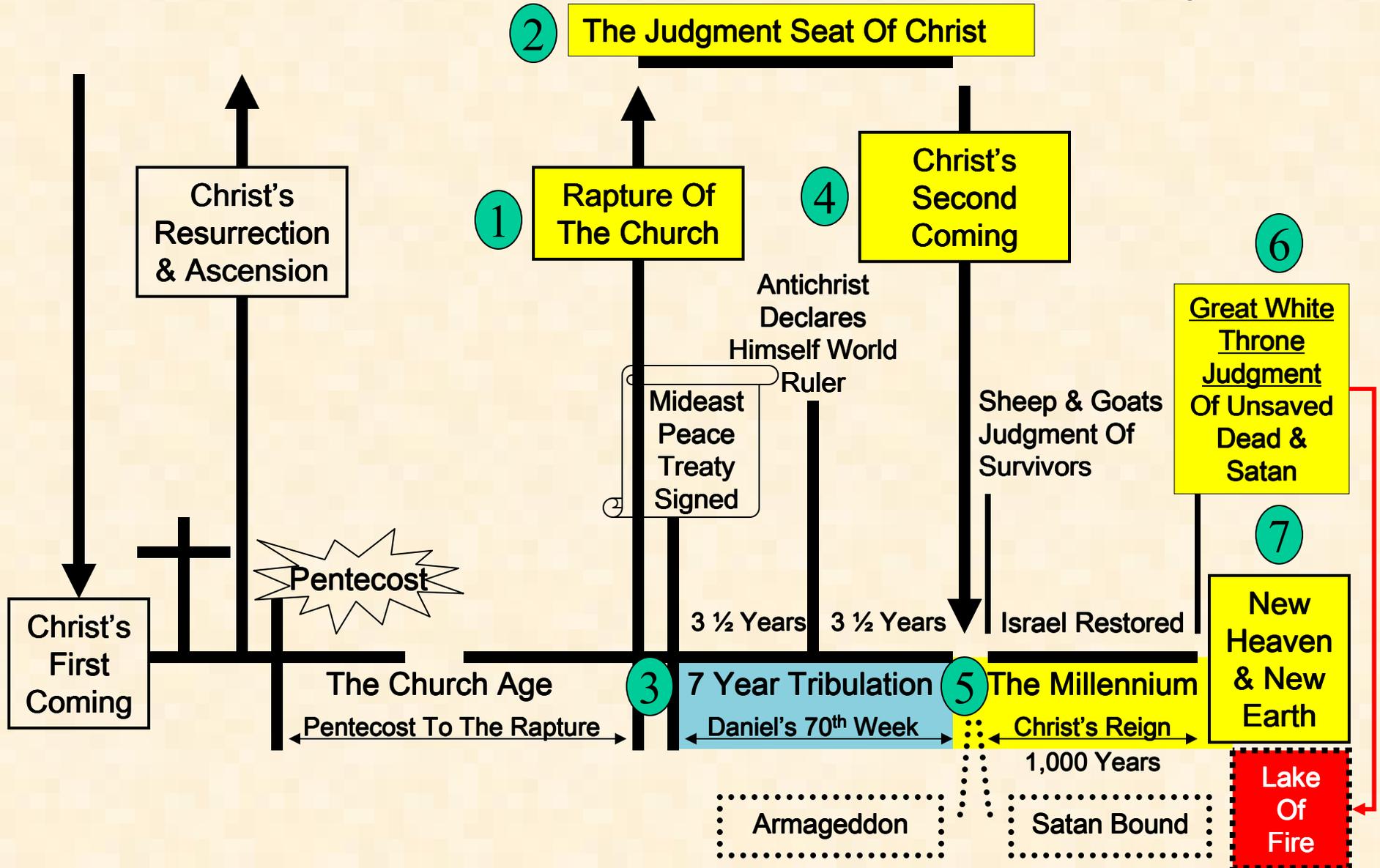


Order Of Events In Bible Prophecy



The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- God is not going to abandon the planet to Satan, the antichrist, and the False Prophet but will raise up those who bear witness to His power and greatness. The most prominent such group is the 144,000.

The 144,000

- The 144,000 are presented in two passages found in Revelation.
- Revelation 7:1-8
- Revelation 14:1-5
- Let's investigate these passages.

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- **Revelation 7:1-4 (NKJV)** *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:*
- Clearly the 144,000 are made up of Jewish people for they are “*of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*” Confirmation that they come from “**ALL**” the tribes is found in verses 5-8.

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- **Revelation 7:5-8 (NKJV)** of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.
- From these verses we learn that 12,000 come from each of Israel's twelve tribes. Clearly God wants us to know that the 144,000 come from the twelve tribes of Israel.

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- **Revelation 7:3 (NKJV) saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”**
- Verse 3 indicates that the 144,000 are “**servants of our God.**” A better translation of “**servants**” is “**bond-servants**” in that it usually indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. This demonstrates that they are saved individuals who will be ministering for the Lord in some way.
- We are not told when they are saved, but most likely it will be during the first half of the Tribulation since the events of Revelation 7 are probably in the first half of the Tribulation.
- Most likely they will be the primary evangelists for God during the Tribulation.

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SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- In His teaching about the Tribulation Jesus said in Matthew 24:14 that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (NKJV)
- The “gospel of the kingdom” will emphasize fact that Jesus Christ is about to return and bring in the promised Messianic Kingdom. It is fitting for God to use saved Jews to proclaim this message (which will include the death, burial & resurrection of Christ).
- Immediately after the setting apart of the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8, the results of their ministry is revealed (7:9-17) – a GREAT multitude of saved people will come from every nation on the earth. This lines up well with the statement of Jesus in Matthew 24.

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SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- **Revelation 7:3-4 (NKJV)** saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:
- From these verses (as well as verses 5-8) we learn that they are “**sealed.**” The concept of “sealing” in the Bible is primarily one of security (e.g., the tomb of Jesus was sealed for the purpose of keeping it safe from tampering).
- **First**, they will need to be protected from the wrath of God that will be poured out during this time. Notice that the angel cried out “**saying, Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their forehead.**”

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- **Second**, such protection will be absolutely essential in light of their ministry of propagating the gospel and the intense persecution of believers by the forces of Satan during the Tribulation (especially during the 2nd half of the Tribulation).
- **Revelation 13:7 (NKJV)** *It was granted to him (i.e., the Antichrist) to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*
- **Daniel 7:25 (NKJV)** *He (i.e., the Antichrist) shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.*

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SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- Let's investigate Revelation 14:1-5.
- In chapters 14 and 15 various other details of the world scene in heaven and earth are introduced in preparation for the final series of seven bowl judgments in chapter 16 and the judgments in chapters 17-18.
- It is reasonable to conclude that this is the same group mentioned in 7:4-8, except that here they are in a later period of the Tribulation. Chronologically the vision anticipates the triumph of the 144,000 still intact at the time of Jesus Christ's return from heaven to earth.
- In contrast with many others who become martyrs, these people appear to live through the period. Also, their purity and godliness as redeemed people is emphasized.

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SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- **Revelation 14:1-5 (NKJV)** Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- The 144,000 are not the only ones God will use to represent Him in those days. God will also use two special witnesses.

The Two Witnesses

- According to Revelation 11, God will raise up two special individuals in the Tribulation who will be given special power to bear testimony for the Lord for 1,260 days (or 3 ½ years).
- **Revelation 11:1-3 (NKJV)** Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

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SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- The fact that they are clothed in “**sackcloth**” (v. 3) suggests that their emphasis will be similar to that of John the Baptist, who also wore sackcloth.
- Sackcloth was a sign of mourning and repentance. It may be concluded that the two witnesses will be announcing a message of repentance because the King is coming (i.e., similar to the message as John the Baptist).
- Notice that the Gentiles “**will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.**” Therefore, the context seems to indicate that the ministry of the two witnesses will be in the 2nd half of the Tribulation (or the last 3 ½ years).

The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- **Revelation 11:4 (NKJV)** These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.
- The description of the two witnesses as olive trees and lampstands has Old Testament background (**Zech. 4:1-14**).
- **Zechariah 4:11-14 (NKJV)** Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?” And I further answered and said to him, “What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?” Then he answered me and said, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” So he said, “These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”

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SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- The two witnesses in Zechariah were Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor. Their connection to the lampstands was that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the olive oil. In a similar way the two witnesses of Revelation 11 will be empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- *Who are these two witnesses in Revelation 11?*
- Like Elijah they will have power to stop rain. Like Moses they will have power to turn water into blood and to bring on plagues. In light of their powers, some suggest that they are Elijah and Moses.
- **Revelation 11:6 (NKJV)** These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

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- Furthermore, both Moses and Elijah were involved in the transfiguration (Matt. 17:3), which anticipated the Second Coming.
- A problem with identifying one as Moses is that he has already died once AND was not allowed to enter the promised land because He marred a picture of Christ by striking the stone instead of speaking to it.
- Another interpretation is that the two witnesses are Enoch and Elijah, who never experienced physical death, but were both translated and caught up to be with the Lord. NOTE: **Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV) And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**
- Substantial support is given the identification of Elijah because of the prediction in Malachi 4:5 that he will appear “**before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.**” Furthermore, Christ said this prophecy of Elijah was only partially fulfilled in His lifetime (Matt. 17:10-13; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17).
- Others say that they are two “Elijah/Moses-like” witnesses. For the reasons above I prefer the interpretation that they are Enoch and Elijah.

The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- **Revelation 11:5, 7-10 (NKJV)** And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

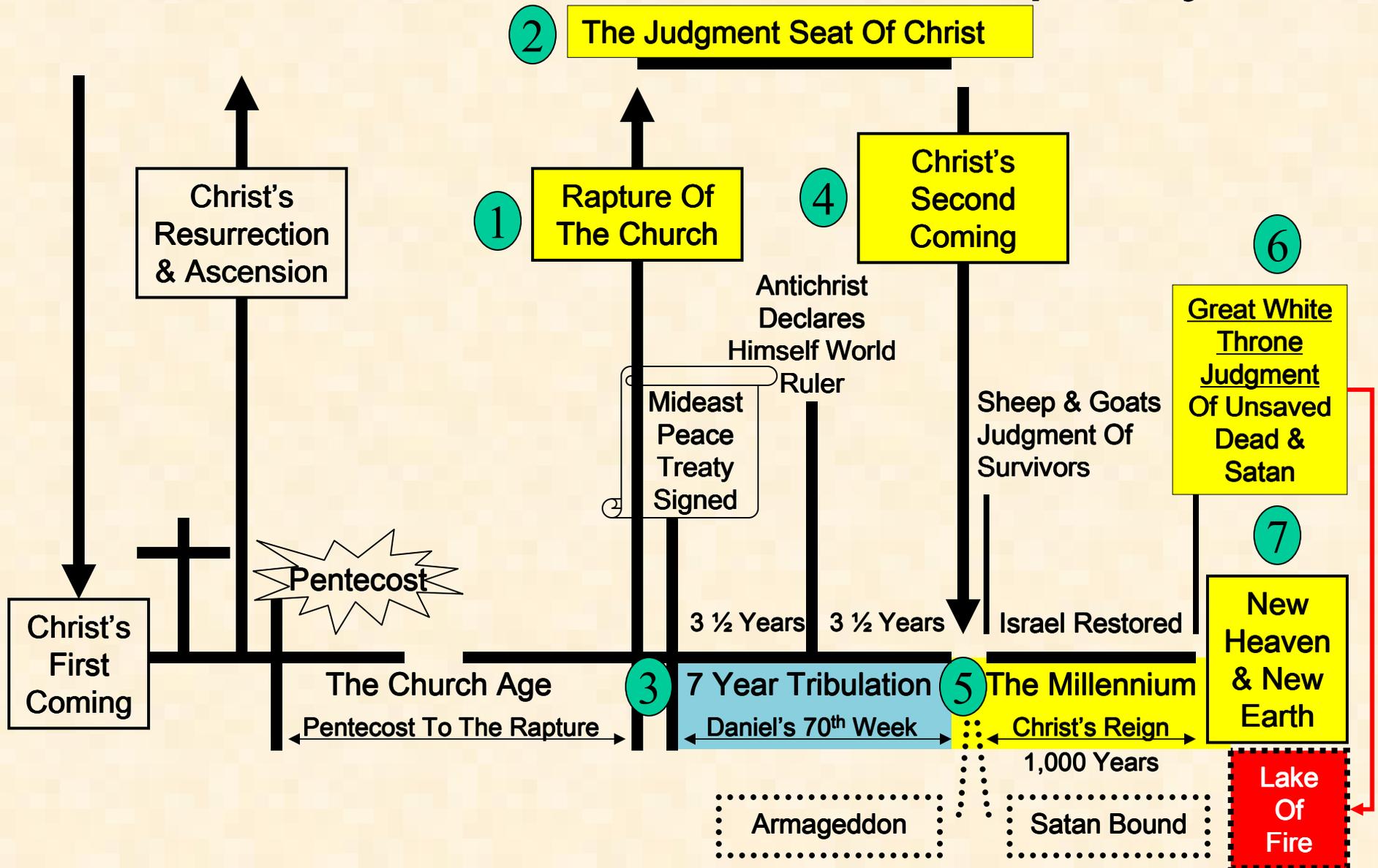
- After the witnesses were killed, their bodies were left unburied in Jerusalem which was “**spiritually called Sodom and Egypt**” because of the false worship of the Antichrist going on there during the 2nd half of the Tribulation.
- For “**three-and-a-half days**” the whole world rejoices over their dead **bodies**. This implies some worldwide display, which is now made possible by television, radio and the internet.
- Their deaths will be considered a great victory for the world ruler and Satan. To celebrate people will “**send gifts to one another.**”
- However, the story about their ministry and impact does not end here.

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- **Revelation 11:11-13 (NKJV)** Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.
- Following this the final seven bowl judgments are unleashed by the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15). This seems to indicate that the death and resurrection of the two witnesses occurs some time near the end of the Tribulation.

Order Of Events In Bible Prophecy



The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

APPLICATION

- Like the 144,000 and the two witnesses, we are God's appointed witnesses today.
- **2 Corinthians 5:20 (NKJV)** Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.
- How are you doing as God's ambassador?
- How have you implored others on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God?
- Does your life message (i.e., the way that you live) point others toward saving faith in Jesus Christ?

The Tribulation Period

SOME KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE TRIBULATION

- **Matthew 5:14-16 (NKJV)** “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
- The Lord wants to use all of us to be shining lights that lead others to glorify our Father in heaven.

