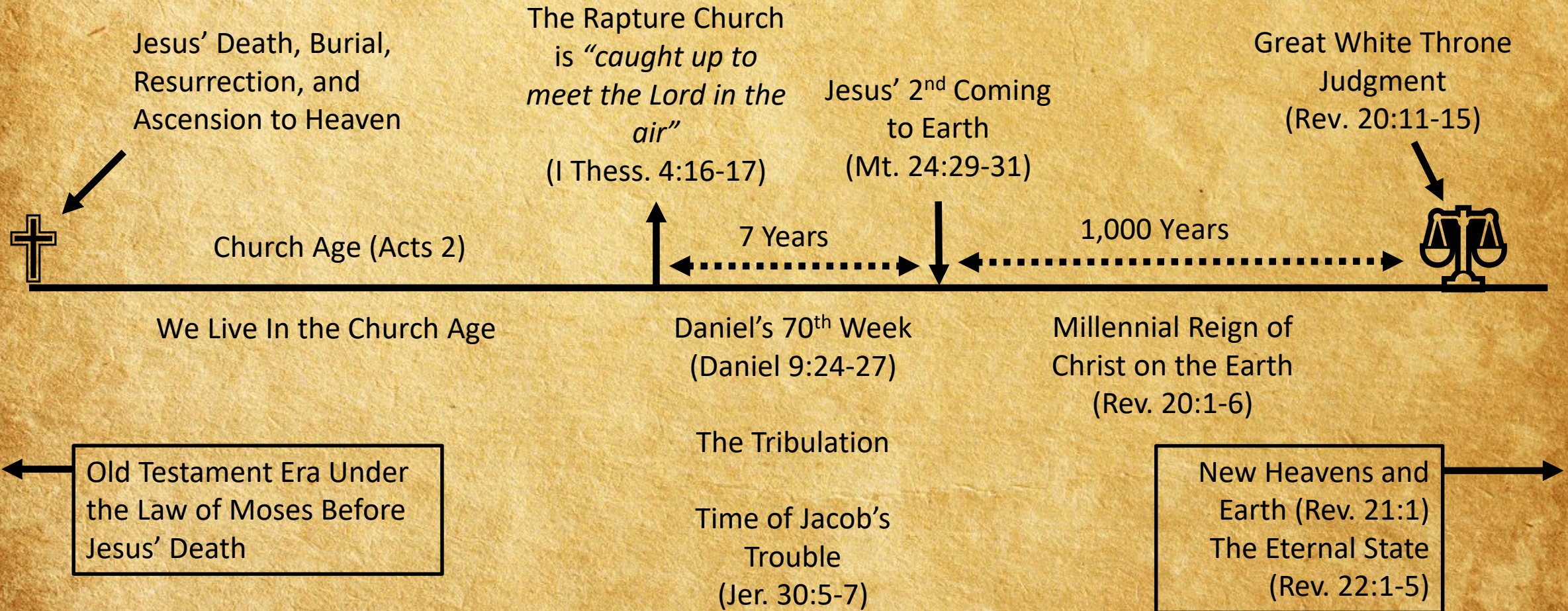


# DISPENSATIONALISM AND MAJOR PROPHETIC SYSTEMS

Introduction to Prophecy Part 2

# Timeline of Past, Present, and Future Events



# What is a “Dispensation?”

- ❖ A “Dispensation” is a time period in history when God acts in a way that is distinct from other times. All major theological systems see various dispensations in the Bible.
  
- ❖ Examples of “Dispensations”
  - After creation but before the fall.
  - After the fall but before the Law of Moses.
  - After the Law of Moses and before the Church.
  - After the Church but before the rapture.
  - After the rapture but before the second coming.
  - After the second coming but before the Great White Throne Judgment.
  - After the Great White Throne Judgment.

# What is “Dispensationalism”?

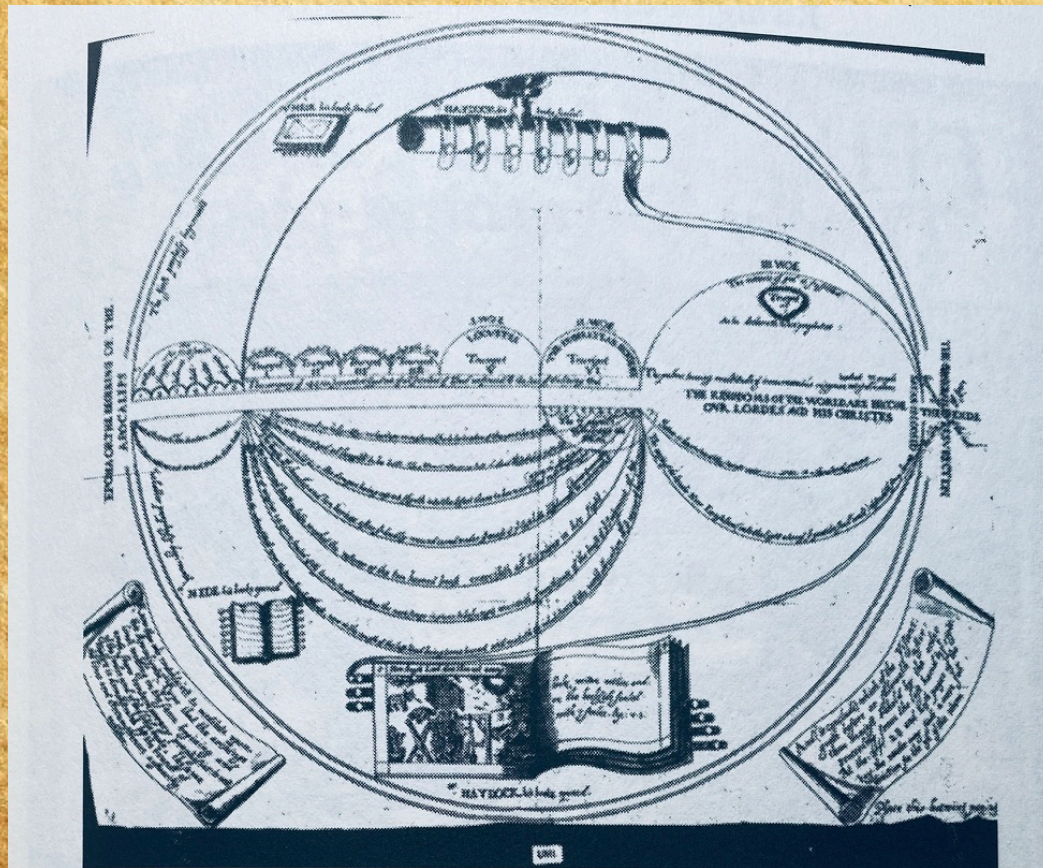
- ❖ “Dispensationalism” is about how one interprets the Bible, organizes the Bible, and understands the relationship between Israel and the church. All dispensationalists see biblical covenants in the Bible, but not the theological covenants.
- ❖ Key distinctives of “Dispensationalism”
  - A more literal approach to interpreting Bible prophecy.
  - An emphasis on how God is working differently in the Church Age than He did in the Old Testament era (discontinuity).
  - The view that the Church has not replaced Israel.
  - The view that there is a unique prophetic future for the nation Israel.
  - The view that the unilateral promises of God to Israel are still in force.

# Reasons Dispensational Views of Prophecy “Appear” to Be New

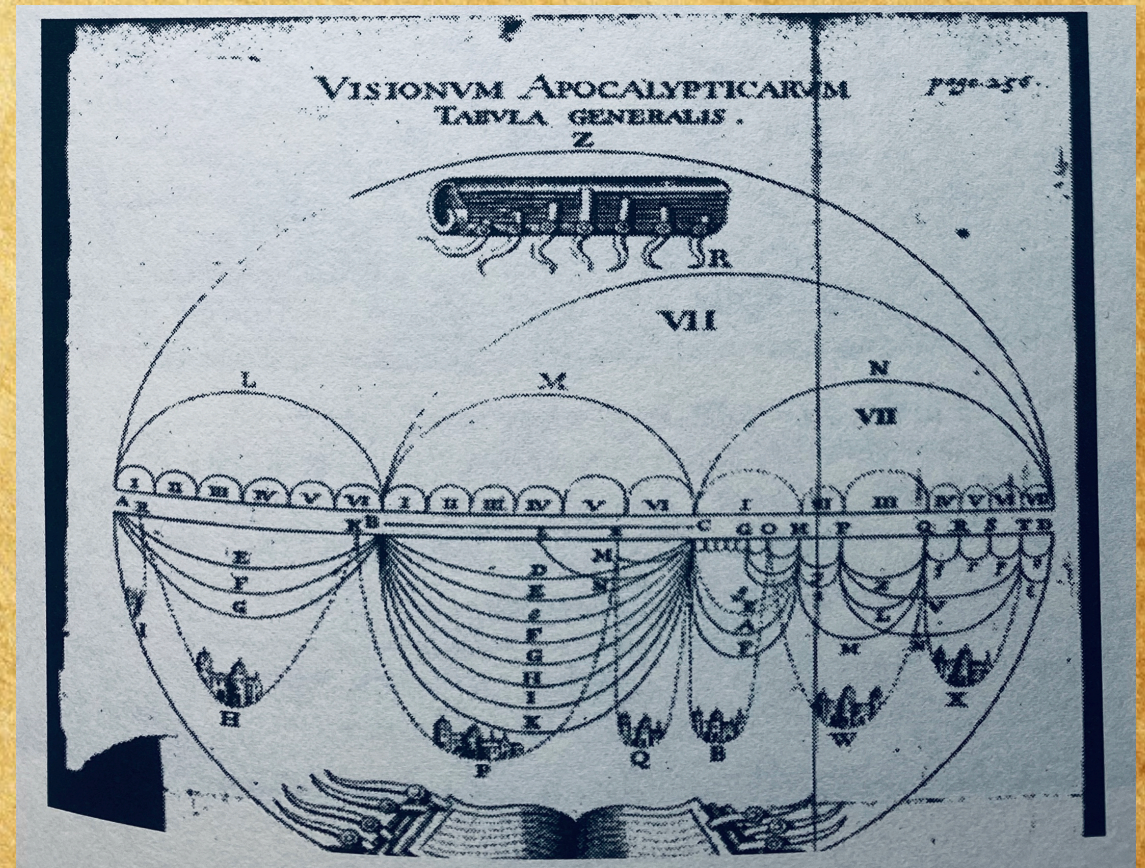
- ❖ The Myth that J. N. Darby invented dispensationalism.
- ❖ Because many want to anchor their doctrine in church history.
- ❖ Reformed publishers don't publish early dispensational works.
- ❖ Date-setting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming by early dispensational authors discredited them and their works.
- ❖ If church history is disregarded, the checking principle seems to rule against the validity of dispensationalism.
- ❖ It wasn't until the 1800's that the church had the luxury to focus on prophecy, which is why so much has been written since the time of J. N. Darby.

# Charts of early forms of dispensationalism before J. N. Darby (born 1800, died 1882)

Joseph Mede (born 1586- died 1639)



Henry More (born 1614, died 1687)



# Four Helpful Facts About the Three Major Prophetic Systems

- ❖ “Millennium” means 1,000 years and is a term used to describe the reign of Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:1-6).
- ❖ All three major prophetic systems have the word “millennial” in their title, but only one believes in a literal millennial or 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth.
- ❖ All three major prophetic systems see figurative language in prophetic texts, but only one system takes the literal reading at face value, if it makes sense in its context.
- ❖ Each of the three major prophetic systems are defined by how they see Jesus’ 1,000-year reign.

# POSTMILLENNIALISM

(Jesus returns after the Millennium.)

- ❖ A spiritualizing approach to interpreting biblical prophecy.
- ❖ The “Millennium” is Jesus’ spiritual rule over the church.
- ❖ The Church evangelizes the world and establishes the kingdom first, then Jesus returns to receive it.
- ❖ Things are getting better and better with time!
- ❖ Almost all prophecy in the New Testament is already fulfilled.
- ❖ The tribulation occurred in 70AD!
- ❖ Jesus can’t return at any moment.
- ❖ Satan is currently bound and no longer deceives the nations.



# AMILLENNIALISM

(There is no literal Millennium.)

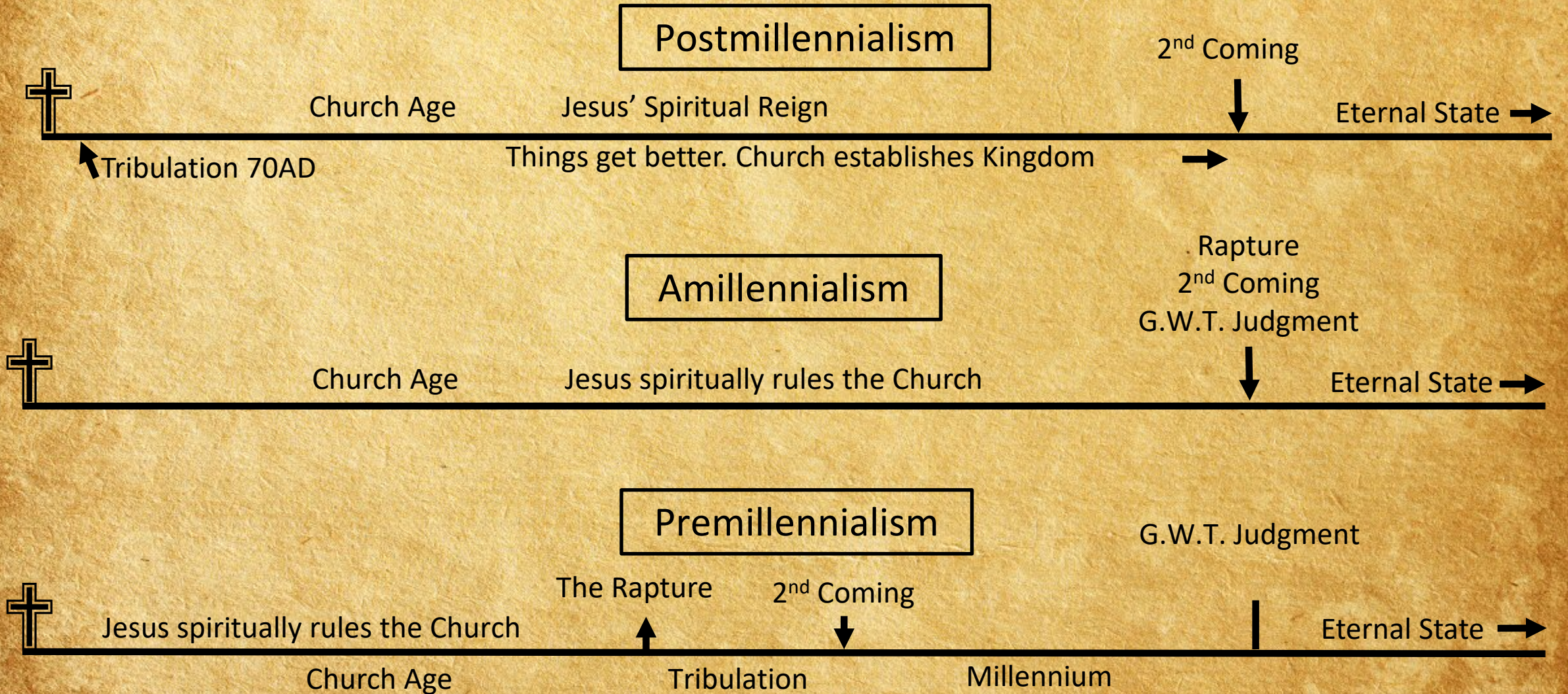
- ❖ A spiritualizing approach to interpreting biblical prophecy.
- ❖ There is no 1,000-year reign of Christ, no millennium, but the church age, and Jesus' spiritual rule.
- ❖ The church age will continue until the rapture, the second coming, and eternal state, which all happen at the same time, in close proximity, at the end of the church age.
- ❖ Jesus can return at any moment.
- ❖ Satan is currently bound and no longer deceives the nations.

# PREMILLENNIALISM

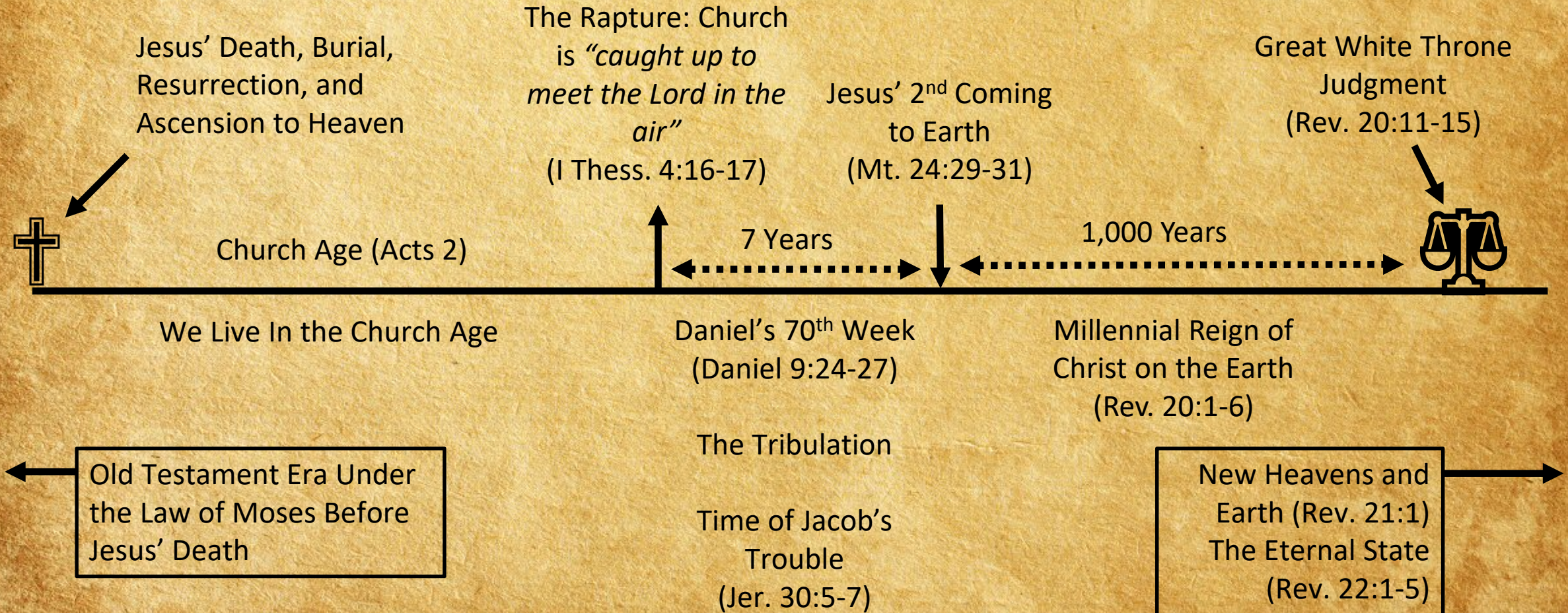
(Jesus returns to establish Millennial Rule.)

- ❖ A literal approach to interpreting prophecy according to the plain meaning of the text.
- ❖ Church age ends when the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air (the Rapture).
- ❖ The Rapture is followed by Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, the Tribulation.
- ❖ Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to earth to establish His 1,000-year reign will occur at the end of the Tribulation.
- ❖ The Great White Throne Judgment will occur after Jesus rules on earth for 1,000 years, then the heavens and earth will be created, and Jesus will rule and reign with the saints forever.
- ❖ Jesus can return at any moment (imminence).

# Comparison of Three Major Prophetic Systems



# Dispensational, Premillennial, Pretribulational View



Finish