02 - CHRONOLOGY

1.) The Cross

✓ At the far left of the timeline, you'll see the Cross, the Resurrection, and the Day of Pentecost. Those events happened in close proximity and were the beginning of the "Last Days" (Acts 2:14-17).

2.) The Church Age

✓ The next stop on our timeline is "the Church Age". Also known as the "Age of Grace", this is a time in which God extends grace to "whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17).

3.) The Rapture

- ✓ The next great event on God's Prophetic Calendar is the Rapture of the Church. In case you're not familiar with the concept, at the Rapture, Jesus descends as far as the clouds. The Christians are caught up to meet Him in the air, and are transported to Heaven, where they'll spend the Tribulation period.
- ✓ There's disagreement on the timing of this event. Some put it before
 the Tribulation period (as I have). Some place it in the middle of the
 Tribulation; and some put it at the end. (For our purposes, go ahead
 and make the Rapture "fluid" in your mind. Move it wherever you
 like, it won't change the rest of the timeline.)
- ✓ Some point out that the word "Rapture" doesn't appear in the Bible. But that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. (The word "Bible" doesn't appear in the Bible, but you're holding one! The word "Trinity" doesn't appear in the Bible, but the *concept* is there. The same thing is true with the Rapture.) In 1 Thess. 4:17, it says the believers will be "caught up". In Latin, the word is "Rapere". (That's where we get the word "Rapture".)

<u>1 Thess. 4:16</u> – "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first ..."

✓ Notice, there's a resurrection that accompanies the Rapture. (But only the dead "in Christ" are raised at this point – the believers. What happens to the unsaved dead? They remain in their graves until the second resurrection, 1007 years later – Rev. 20:5a).

<u>1 Thess. 4:16-17</u> – "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (three sounds): and the dead in Christ shall <u>rise</u> (be resurrected) first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be <u>caught up together with them</u> in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord".

The Speed of the Rapture

<u>1 Cor. 15:51-52</u> – "Behold, I show you a mystery; We will not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye."

- ✓ <u>Greek</u> "A period of time <u>so small</u> that it can't be further divided." (How far can time be divided?)
- ✓ <u>Millisecond</u> a thousandth of a second, <u>Microsecond</u> millionth of a second, <u>Nanosecond</u> a billionth of a second, <u>Attosecond</u> a quintillionth of a second, <u>Zeptosecond</u> a sextillionth of a second, <u>Yoctosecond</u> one septillionth of a second, <u>Planck Time</u> 10 -44

4.) The Judgment Seat of Christ

- ✓ The first thing that happens upon our arrival in Heaven, is the
 Judgment Seat of Christ. (This judgment is for believers only.
 There's another judgment for unbelievers, 1007 years later.)
- ✓ <u>Judgment Seat</u> There were two types of Judgment Seats in the ancient world. The first resembled a courtroom. (Jesus stood before Pilate's judgment seat that was like "going to court".) The second kind of J.S. was found at the ancient Olympics. At the end of the Games, the contestants would be brought before the Judgment

(Bema - Reward) Seat to receive their prizes. When Paul discusses the Judgment Seat of Christ, it's this second one that he has in mind. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a judgment of your sins. It's a judgment of works to determine rewards. (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:8-15)

5.) The Tribulation Period

- ✓ Once we've arrived safely in Heaven, the Tribulation can begin. This seven-year period is divided into two sections, each consisting of 3.5 years. The first half is called the "Tribulation", while the second half is known as the "Great Tribulation". (The second half is worse.)
- ✓ When he first comes on the scene, the Antichrist presents himself as a man of peace. Daniel 9:27 speaks of a peace treaty that he'll sign with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many (Jews) for one week (seven years) ..." This treaty will be short-lived, however, because in the middle of the Tribulation he'll break this agreement. At that time, he'll enter the Jews' Temple, set up his image, and demand to be worshipped as God. At that time, the Mark of the Beast is instituted.
- ✓ Jesus described the Tribulation as a time of great trouble (Matt. 24:21). It's also a time characterized by wrath: Man is angry (Rev. 11:18a), Satan is angry (Rev. 12:12), and God is pouring out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world (Rev. 6:15-17).
- ✓ God's wrath is poured out in the form of four sets of 7 judgments. The 7 Seals describe things that affect the Nations. The 7 Trumpets describe things that affect Nature. The 7 Bowls are things that affect man. And the nature of the 7 Thunders is unknown. Essentially, these judgments result in God gaining control of the kingdoms of this world (Rev. 11:15).

6.) The Battle of Armageddon

✓ Armageddon takes place at the <u>very end</u> of the Tribulation period. The armies of Antichrist converge on the city of Jerusalem. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished (raped); and half of the city shall go forth into captivity ... " (Zech. 14:2)

- ✓ Armageddon begins badly for Israel. Half of Jerusalem falls. The women are raped, and the city is pillaged. Then, just when it looks like the second half is going to fall, God's going to do something He hasn't done in thousands of years. (Remember the plague of darkness in Egypt?) God's going to do it again! God's going to "shut out the lights". A supernatural darkness will settle over the earth, as people are given *one last chance* to receive Christ.
- ✓ When the period of darkness ends (and everyone's final decision has been made), Jesus will return "like lightning". The armies of the Antichrist will be destroyed (Rev. 19:17-18), the unbelievers will be removed from the face of the earth and cast into hell (Matt. 13:40-42), and Satan will be bound for 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-2).

7.) The Resurrection and Judgment of the Unsaved

Rev. 20:11-12a – "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead ("spiritually dead"), small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life ..."

- ✓ John describes a Book, and a set of books. He plainly identifies the single book as "the Book of Life". Essentially, this is God's family album. Everyone who received Christ during their lifetime appears in this Book. (Being lost, the people at this judgment don't appear.) Once it's determined that they're lost, Jesus turns to the set of books, which are the Books of Works. They're judged according to their works and are assigned a level of punishment in the Lake of Fire. Then, Jesus reigns for 1000 yrs from Jerusalem (Millennium).
- ✓ After the Millennium, the old heaven and earth are destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10-12). After this, God creates a new Heaven and a new Earth (Rev. 21:1-4, Isa. 65:17). And we enter into eternity. (Rev. 21:5, Eph. 2:7.)