

God's Plan of the Ages

(Excerpted from A Pictorial Guide to Bible Prophecy, by Dr. Paul Lee Tan)

I. Importance of an Order of Events

Bible prophecy unfolds in orderly, chronological form. The prophetic interpreter should know the sequential outworking of future events. Otherwise, he is soon overwhelmed with unrelated and unintelligible bits and pieces of predictions and events.

II. Introducing a Simple Chart

Several major prophetic events are recorded in the Bible. How do they fit into God's chronological arrangement of the future?

The answer may be in a brief little chart. This chart is so simple that one could sketch it even in the imagination. It embraces all major prophetic events found in Scripture.

Please go ahead and sketch it out, memorize it, and hopefully even dream about it tonight.

Let us call this chart "God's Plan of the Ages." And this is how it may be drawn—

A. The Time Line

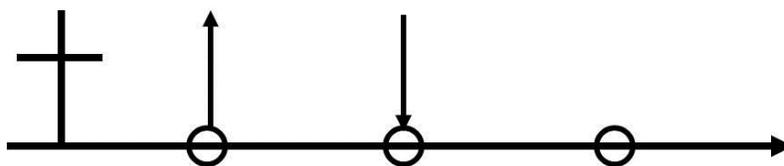
First, draw a straight horizontal line, from left to right. End the line with an arrow pointing to the extreme right. Place the Cross at the very beginning of this line. This is your "Time Line."



B. Dividing the Line

Second, divide this time line into 4 equal parts as follows:

- (1) Place an arrow at a point $1/4$ up the line, starting from the extreme left.
- (2) Place another arrow at a point $1/2$ up this time line.
- (3) Place a circle at a point $3/4$ up the time line.



You have now divided the time line into 4 equal parts (using two arrows and a circle).

The first arrow should be pointing up and the second arrow pointing down.

C. Labeling the Line

Third, label these 4 points, starting from your left, thus:

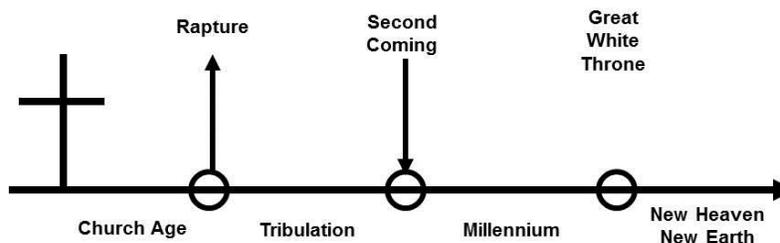
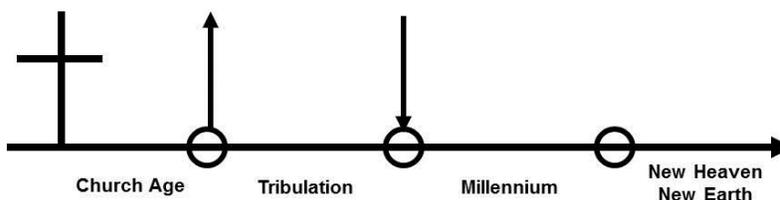
- Church Age,
- Tribulation,
- Millennium,
- New Heaven and New Earth.

Earth.

These are the names of the four sections of your time line.

In addition, you may label

- the first arrow (pointing up) as "Rapture,"
- the second arrow (pointing down) as "Second Coming,"
- the third point (circle) as the "Great White Throne."

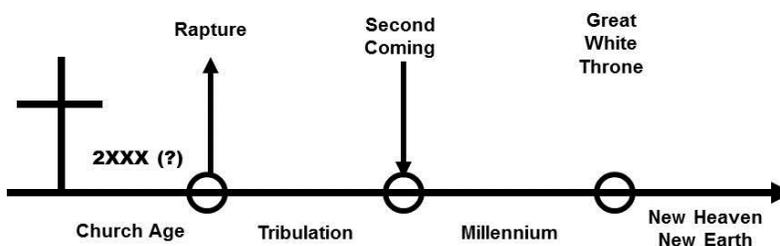


Should you desire to indicate the length or duration of each period, you may first place above the "Church Age" the number of this present year, immediately followed by a question mark in parenthesis.

The question mark signifies that we are not sure if the Lord is coming this year.

Then place the number 7 above the "Great Tribulation," since there will be 7 years in the future tribulation.

And the number 1,000 should be above the "Millennium." The millennium

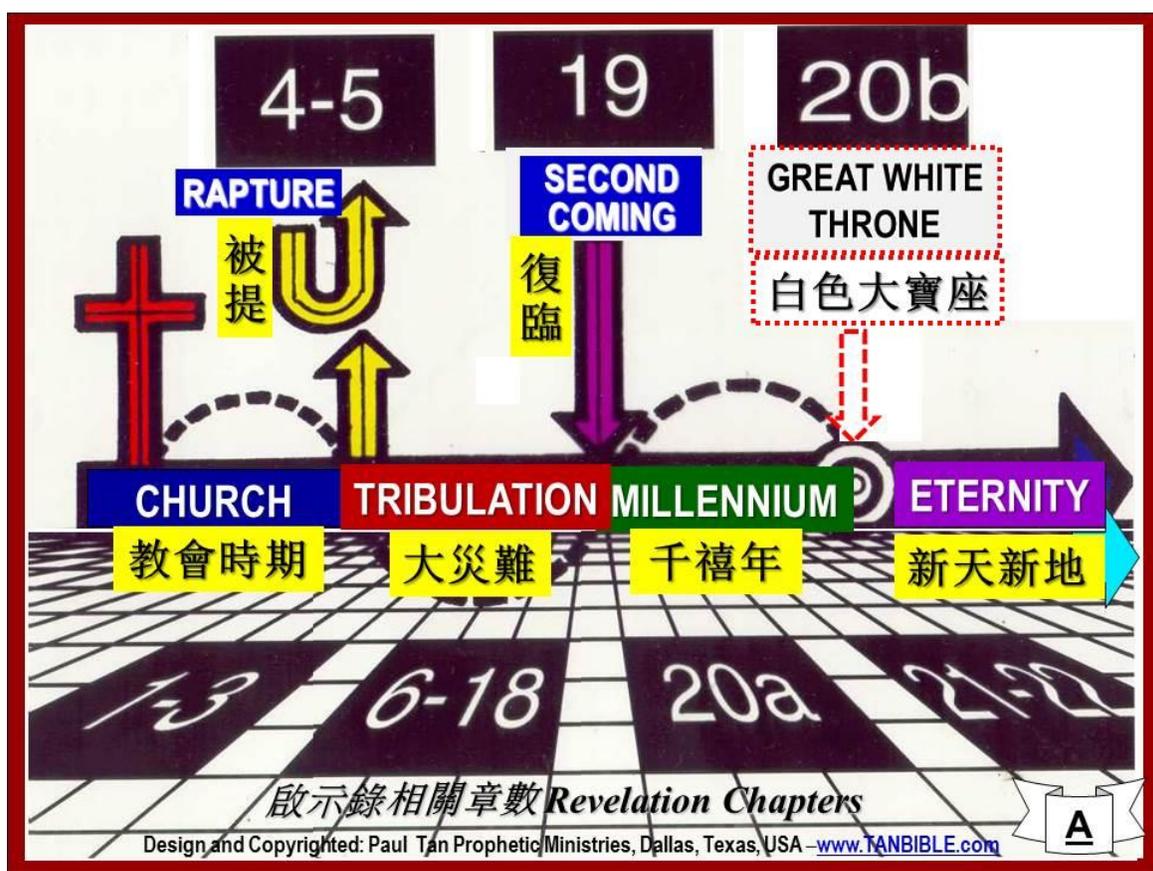
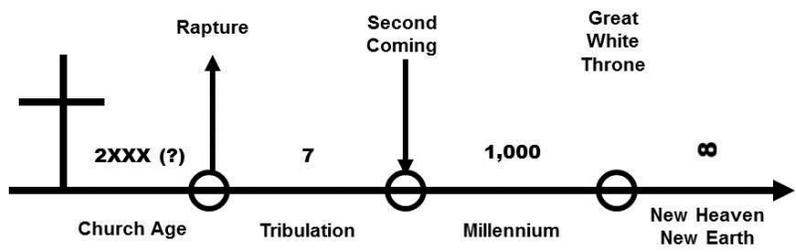


would be a 1,000-year period when Christ will reign on earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Finally, the mathematical symbol for infinity (which is similar to the number 8 lying down!) should be above the "New Heaven and New Earth."

You have now sketched a relatively complete chart of God's Plan for the Ages. It shows the chronology as well as the succession of prophetic events.

Every major prophecy in the Bible may be fitted into this chart!



III. Observing the Finished Chart

Take a closer look at this chart. Five observations are suggested:

First observation:

We are now in the *Church Age*. And it is the longest period of time on the chart, except for Eternity. God bestows grace and mercy on this age, giving one chance after another, day after day, to all people.

The world is getting progressively decadent. However, there is still a restraint on sin due to the influence of true Christians as well as the presence of the Holy Spirit. But one day (or night), the church age will end, Christ will come at the rapture to remove all true believers from earth into heaven.

Second observation:

The *Great Tribulation* follows the rapture. The Bible gives no signs of the rapture (Christ will come like a thief in the night). However, Scripture does give thousands of details on the tribulation which will follow.

Therefore, it is important to be knowledgeable on the details of the tribulation period, since it provides clues on the closeness of the rapture.

As we see the signs of the tribulation sprouting, forming, and flowering, the feeling arises in our hearts that the time may be short. We may not know the rapture's exact time and hour, but we may tell the season of the Lord's coming.

Third observation:

Earth will not end at World War III or at Christ's Second Coming. There will yet be a thousand-year period of peace and prosperity on this earth called *The Millennium*.

This period follows the Great Tribulation. It will not be until after the millennium—before the Great White Throne judgment—that this old world will be pulverized.

Fourth observation:

There will be a final day of judgment for all unbelievers before the *Great White Throne*. Every act, word, thought of unregenerate men will have to be accounted for. If the blood of Christ does not cover the record of a person's life, he will be held personally liable at the judgment day.

Fifth observation:

There will be an eternal home in the *New Heaven and New Earth* for all believers. It will be a realm of perfect joy and everlasting bliss.

