

LEFT BEHIND? WHY? AND FOR HOW LONG? By Roger Walkwitz

Have you read the 'Left Behind' series of books? We have not, but we did watch several of the videos. They are interesting fiction, but false teaching.

Since eschatology seems to be a hot topic for many, judging by the best-seller status of these series of books, follow with me into some significant discoveries in the Scripture related to just one small, but important part: The Tribulation. Granted, there is a lot of confusion about end times and The Tribulation, but that is even more of a reason to study it more carefully. Inaccurate translations have also contributed to the confusion.

Revelation 7 is a good place to start: 7:1-8 deals with 144,000 Jewish slaves of YHVH who receive His seal on their foreheads. What these are going to do is nowhere stated, to my knowledge, even though some think these are going to evangelize the world "after the church is raptured to heaven and a 7-year Tribulation begins on the Jewish people." Sounds anti-Jewish to me; while the gentile church parties in heaven, the Jews suffer?

The rest of Revelation 7 deals with a select group from the rest of mankind, *a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, and tribes, and peoples, and languages*. Why is it that no one could number this multitude? There is no fixed number that cannot be written down by using scientific notation, as a number times 10 to some exponent. No man can number this multitude because it is not yet a fixed number! It is ongoing while John is watching, and therefore only YHVH knows the final number, just as the meter while pumping gasoline is revolving and the amount of gasoline pumped is known only after the pump stops.

A correct translation will show this clearly. When a present tense verb is translated as a past tense, that makes for trouble. Revelation 7:14 should read, *These are the ones coming out (or who are coming out) of The Tribulation, The Great One*, not "have come out" as some translations read. The action or counting is not yet finished.

Synonyms in translations make for easy reading sometimes, but keep the reader from following certain words consistently. Word studies need to be from the Greek. *Thlipsis* in Greek is such a word. It would help if it were translated consistently as "tribulation" instead of as affliction, suffering, etc. Then take *thlipsis* in the singular and find all the places where it is preceded with the definite article, "the," in Greek of course, as our English translations are not careful in handling the Greek articles. We all know the difference between "a house," just any old house, and "the house," a specific house. *Thlipsis* with a definite article becomes The Tribulation, not just any old tribulation. We saw that Revelation 7:14 has: *The Tribulation, The Great One*. This is the only place in the NT where this specific expression occurs. Question, "Why is it so great?"

There are only a few places where The Tribulation occurs. Revelation 1:9, *I John, your brother and co-sharer in The Tribulation...* Believe it or not, John is saying that he is in The Tribulation at the time he is writing, and watching it in Rev 7!

Romans 5:5, *And not only so, but also we boast in the tribulations, knowing that The Tribulation works patience...* Two more references should make it clear that Shaul knows that he also is in The Tribulation. Romans 12:12, *...in the hope rejoicing, in The Tribulation showing endurance...* 2 Corinthians 4:17, *For the present lightness of The Tribulation...*

Both John and Shaul know that they were in The Tribulation, The Great One. What makes it great? Ans: the length of time. The Tribulation began at the stoning of Stephen, Acts 11:19, *They therefore that were scattered abroad upon The Tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia...* and has continued until the present time and will continue until Yeshua Returns. *The present lightness of The Tribulation* indicates that it is not severe all the time. History shows that The Tribulation against YHVH's children has been severe in different places on earth at certain times, and at other times it has been very light, or not at all. The last century has shown a tremendous increase in tribulation against YHVH's people, the Jews and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua HaMashiach.

Check out Matthew 24:21, *for then will be a great tribulation such as has not happened from the beginning of the world...* and Matthew 24:29, *Immediately after The Tribulation of those days...* Here The Tribulation is qualified as "of those days" and only a great one, not the great one. This final blast is very severe, the most severe ever, and apparently has not started yet. The duration of this one is not specific except to say that it is shortened, otherwise no one would be left alive. Notice this shortened time is for the sake of the elect, Believers who are still alive on earth! No Pre-Trib Rapture!

As for being "Left Behind," consider Matthew 24:38-41, *For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and **took them all away**; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken (away in judgment), and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken (away in judgment), and one is left.* The sequence from Noah to the two men and two women cannot be reversed to satisfy a false theology. Noah was "left behind" and blessed, and so also the man and woman left behind.

In summary, we have found that "The Tribulation, The Great One" is great because of the length of time that it covers, that it is world wide in extent, wherever YHVH's children reside, sometimes severe, sometimes very light, and that it has been ongoing since the time of the Apostles, so that the final number is known only to YHVH. Both John and Shaul say they are in The Tribulation. We find also that "The Tribulation of those days" is the most severe ever, possibly indicating the final crescendo, the last blast of satanic hatred toward YHVH and His people.

"Caught as a thief in the night"? Not for the true Believer, who is walking in the Light, knowing the Scriptures and alert to current events as prophecy unfolds. Take a look at 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5. *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night. When **they** are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon **them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and **they** shall in*

*no wise escape. But **ye**, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake **you** as a thief: for **ye** are all sons of light, and sons of the day: **we** are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

The Greek word *apantesis* is used only 4 times: Matthew 25:1, 6; Acts 28:15; and 1 Thessalonians 4:17. In each case it indicates a meeting or official welcome of a newly arrived dignitary, and to escort the dignitary to a previously arranged place or activity, without undue delay. A 7 or 3.5 year delay between a “rapture” and the arrival of Yeshua on earth does not fit the evidence.

Added to this clue is the timing of the *moadim*, Appointed Times or Festivals of YHVH. The prophetic fulfillment of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost all occur right on schedule in the same year, the year when Yeshua was crucified, buried, rose from the dead, and ascended back to heaven. It is therefore reasonable to expect *Yom Teruah* or Rosh HaShanah, *Yom Kippur*, and *Sukkot* to all occur right on schedule in the same year of Yeshua’s Return. Yom Teruah is the Blowing of the Shofar: wise up, be ready! We think the last or 7th shofar will be on Yom Kippur, Leviticus 25:8-10, *You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud shofar on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the shofar throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.*

We think Yom Kippur is the day of Yeshua’s appearance on earth. The Shofar is blown on Yom Kippur only once in 50 years, to announce the beginning of the Jubilee. Do we know the year of the Jubilee? No. Records in the Temple were lost. No one knows the exact year that we are in now, so, just to be sure, the Shofar is blown every year now on Yom Kippur! Sukkot is a Jubilee, the beginning of the Kingdom Age or Millenium. If this is the case, and it seems quite likely, then we should not expect any imminent appearance of Yeshua, but only at the time of the Fall Festivals. The “thief in the night” surprise is only for the outsider. We should remember also that the basic meaning of *moadim* is “an appointment”! Believers have an “appointment” to meet Yeshua in the air, fall in line behind those coming with Him, and return immediately to the earth.

Another factor to consider is Malachi 4:5, *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.* We are expecting Elijah to show up before Yeshua returns. When will that be? At Passover time, which is why all Jewish Haggadot have a place set for Elijah at the Seder table. John the baptizer was the forerunner for Yeshua’s first coming. Elijah himself will return to be the forerunner for Yeshua’s second coming.

What year this might be will become clearer as the time approaches, as those walking in the Light can see clearly. We have eyes to see, spiritual eyes and keen discernment of the very slick deceptions and counterfeits that will abound as the time approaches. The Bible is clear in its warnings.