

## LEFT BEHIND? WHY? AND FOR HOW LONG?

By Roger Walkwitz

“HAVE you read the ‘Left Behind’ series of books? You really need to! They are great!” We have not, but probably you have been asked that same question, several times.

Since eschatology seems to be a hot topic for many, judging by the best-seller status of these series of books, follow with me in 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.” It sounds quite anti-Jewish to me, as the gentile church parties while 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 Great Tribulation,” not “have come out” as some translations read. The action or counting is not yet finished.

Synonyms make for easy reading sometimes, but keep the reader from following certain words consistently. *Thlipsis* in Greek is such a word. It would help if it were trans-

lated consistently as “tribulation” instead of as affliction, suffering, etc. Then take *thlipsis* 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 we read in 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 are in The Tribulation, The Great One. What makes it great? Answer: The length of time. The Tribulation began at the stoning of Stephen, 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 different times, and at other times very light, or not at all. The last century has shown a tremendous increase in tribulation against YHVH’s people, Jew 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. It 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, who are still alive on earth!

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 is 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.

“Left behind?” “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. For how long will those who walk in darkness be left behind? Some say 7 years, some say 3½ years, some say a shorter time. A possible clue is the Greek word *apantesis*, 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 3½ year delay does not fit the evidence.

Added to this clue is the timing of the *moadim*, 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/Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur,<sup>1</sup> and Sukkot<sup>2</sup> to all occur right on schedule in the same year of Yeshua’s Return. Yom Teruah might be the last or 7<sup>th</sup> shofar, Yom Kippur Yeshua’s appearance on earth, and Sukkot the beginning of the Kingdom Age/Millennium. 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 *moad* 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.

What year this might be will become clearer as the time approaches, as those walking in the Light can see clearly. They 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. There is no need to be “Left Behind.”

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<sup>1</sup> The Day of Atonement.

<sup>2</sup> “Tabernacles.”

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## שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

שְׁמוֹעַ ACCORDING to Rabbi Yeshua (Mark 12:28-31), the most important *mitzvot* (commandments) are the *Sh'ma* (“Hear, O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one,” from Deuteronomy 6:4) is the first and foremost commandment of all. The second foremost commandment is, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” from Leviticus 19:18. According to Rabbinic Judaism also, these are the foremost commandments.

In the Hebrew, the *Sh'ma* reads as follows: “Sh'ma Yisrael, YHWH Eloheinu, YHWH echad.” The Hebrew text is shown above. You might have noticed that the ם (ayin) of שְׁמוֹעַ is bigger than the other letters. Likewise, the ך (dalet) of אֶחָד is also bigger. This is exactly the way it is written on all Torah scrolls. The reason that this is done is to prevent someone from misreading the text to read שְׁמוֹעַ, which means “perhaps.” Likewise, the ך could be confused with a resh (ר), so אֶחָד could be read as אַחַד, which means “another.” As Yeshua said, He has not come to abolish even one letter from Torah (Matthew 5:17-19). Each letter is extremely important. If the ם and the ך were to be confused, the text would read, “Perhaps, O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is another (god).”

Source: **Penteteuch & Haftoras**, Dr. J.H. Hertz, Soncino Press, pages 769-770.