

What About Us?

Hopefully you already read [End Times](#) If you haven't please read that first because it sets the background for this article.

And hopefully that means you are in the habit of reading the reference chapters as they come up. Please do. OK, so here we are, Christians, interrupting God's plan for the Jews. How's that going to end for us? And when?

The Rapture

The word "rapture" actually isn't in the Bible. (Neither is "trinity" by the way). It's a theological word used to label the last moment of the church on Earth. It is described in [1 Corinthians 15](#) and [1 Thessalonians 4](#). It's a moment in time when Yeshua returns to gather his church. All the Christians who have already died will be resurrected - in new eternal, spiritual, bodies, not in their old bodies, (that would be "raised" like Lazarus, this is "resurrected" like Yeshua). Paulus says this will happen in an instant. One moment we'll be in our current, earthly bodies, then next in our spiritual bodies, in the sky with Yeshua.

Now when that happened to Yeshua his earthly body disappeared and just the grave clothes were left. Presumably that will happen to us too. There will be little piles of clothes all over the world where the Christians were going about their business at the moment of the rapture. I wonder what those left behind will make of that! Probably alien abductions?

Yeshua mentioned the rapture event in [Matthew 24](#) too. And he says that this event will be followed by terrible days.

Btw: notice that the reunion takes place in the air, (up in the clouds). Yeshua doesn't return to the ground during the rapture. That happens later. That will be the "Day of Yahweh". But first, something else needs to be played out.

The rapture is what Paulus calls in Romans 11, "the full number of the Gentiles". And in that chapter Paulus says that Israel has been hardened until then, but after that God will go back to dealing with them. The rapture marks the day that the "interruption" is finished and God returns to his plans for Israel. He returns to Israel to play out the 70th "seven" of Daniel's vision.

The Great Tribulation

And what a "seven". This period has been labelled "The Great Tribulation" because of the terrible things that happen on the planet during that short 7 year period.

Btw: there is a lot of disagreement amongst Christians about whether the rapture occurs before the tribulation, in the middle of it, at the end of it, or even not at all. But once you realise that there are two systems operating... God dealt with the Jews, he interrupted that to deal with us, and then he needs to go back and finish something with them. Then it becomes clear that both systems won't operate at the same time. So the church must be finished first, and then God will deal with the Jews. So the rapture must occur before the tribulation. Of course, this is great news for Christians.

Now it's time for us to venture into the book of Revelation. In the beginning, (in verse 18), the angel tells John to write what he has seen and what will take place later. Some Christians believe that this book is just an allegory, just a picture story, that is there to help us explain the spiritual side of the truth. But remember our rule? If it makes sense literally, then let's read it literally.

Revelation does make sense literally. Even if it's a bit hard to comprehend. And it specifically says that it contains prophecy. So, let's see what it says.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain 7 letters to 7 churches that existed at the time John wrote the book, (about 100AD). Although they are also very "generic" letters to 7 churches having 7 problems and offering 7 solutions from Yeshua. (See if one of them sounds like your church. How would you apply Yeshua's solution there?).

It's also a pretty safe bet, that if you're in a Western church, then it's like the last one (Laodicea).

In Chapter 4, John is suddenly in heaven. (Was that the rapture?) And the Lamb is on his throne encircled by thousands upon thousands, (the raptured church?) And he alone is declared worthy to open the scrolls.

[Revelation 6](#) is the beginning of the tribulation. Disasters unfold as each seal is opened and read: death, destruction, earthquakes, even the sun and moon are affected. Finally people all around the planet will realise that this is the day of God's wrath. Now, God has their attention.

[Revelation 7](#) continues the story. 144,000 Jews are specially chosen to be "sealed" so they will not be harmed by the events that are to come. (Notice that the church is already in heaven, standing around the throne during these events. The tribulation is not for the church.) When Yeshua opens the 7th seal, there will be silence for half an hour. You know the kind of silence when you suddenly see something so horrific it takes your breath away and you can't even speak.

The destruction so far has been the warm up. With the seven trumpets in [Revelation 8, 9](#) comes horrendous devastation. One third of the land destroyed, a third of the sea wiped out along with all the life in it and ships on it, a third of the fresh water too. We think one oil spill, and a 1 degree global warming is bad. One third of the planet is going to be wiped out in a very short period of time. Somehow even the sun will be affected and we will have less light.

And then the angels are crying "woe" because of what is still to come! Still to come!

Now this doesn't make sense literally. A star is given a key, and there are locusts with women's hair and lions teeth!

But in verse 11, we see that their king is Abaddon, Appolyon... (these words are Hebrew and Greek for "Destroyer"). Their king is Satan, and the locusts are demons who have been imprisoned in the Abyss. They are allowed out to take revenge on people, but... not to kill them. So much suffering for five months, that men will be begging to die, but unable to do so.

Except those who were sealed for God, who will be protected from harm. Do you think that those suffering will notice that God's people are protected and turn to him for help? Read verse 20... nope.

Now something else happens [Revelation 10, 11](#) God's witnesses stand in Jerusalem. Power to stop the rain and to turn waters into blood? Remind you of anyone? Elijah stopped the rain, Moses turned water into blood, ... could it be them? Do you remember who appeared on the mountain of transfiguration with Yeshua? It was Moses and Elijah right?

Now we know Elijah was taken up to heaven without dying. But for Moses the Bible says that he went up the mountain and died.

But both these witnesses will die in Jerusalem sometime in the future. Whoever they are, they didn't die already. They will be killed by the beast from the Abyss, Satan. But then days later God will breathe life back into them. A bit of a pattern for Satan eh... every time he kills someone and it looks like he won, they come back and he ends up losing even more. Just when everyone is cheering him for defeating the two hated witnesses, they get up and rise up into heaven in front of everyone.

Then the 7th trumpet is sounded and the time for judgement has arrived.

The Major Players

Now, in the next few chapters of [Revelation 12, 13](#) we are introduced to some major players. A woman who is chased by a seven headed dragon whose tail sweeps a third of the stars from the sky! She gave birth to a son who will rule the world, but before the dragon could devour the son, he was snatched up to the throne of God. Obviously, not literal... so, could the woman be Israel/Jerusalem? And the son? ... Yeshua? Seems to fit. And the dragon of course, would be Satan again who took a third of the angels with him when he fell. And now the woman is fleeing and hiding somewhere for 1260 days... 3½ years again! That number just keeps coming up. And down in verse 14 we see that expression from Daniel... a time, times and half a time.

And now another beast, this time from the sea - given power and authority over the whole world for 42 months... yep, 3½ years. Hmm...

And finally, a third beast, from the earth - a deceiving miracle worker who even gives life to an idol of the first beast and forces everyone to take the mark of the beast on their hand or forehead in order to be able to buy and sell anything. What's the mark? No idea. Who's the beast? No idea. What's the 666 all about? No idea.

Over the years I have heard all sorts of speculation about this. From the Pope, to Henry Kissinger, and recently to Javier Solana, because he is head of the WEU, (the military arm of the EU), and EU recommendation 666 gave him authority to deploy the EU military whenever he sees fit. (Actually that does make him very powerful, and it's a pretty dangerous law to pass, but I don't know if it makes him "the beast"). It's all speculation. Avoid speculation. When it happens everyone will know who it is, and everyone will be surprised.

And now, the seven last plagues of God's wrath. Yet, even as the entire sea is wiped out, and the sun scorches down on them for worshipping the beast. Even then they would rather curse God than repent. (This is a good time to stop and remember that you are just like them, and it was only by grace that God saved you from being one of them).

Even at the end when the greatest earthquake of all time destroys every city, and 50Kg hailstones are falling from the sky, they continue to curse God. Seriously, they recognise that it is God who is doing it, but they refuse to repent.

And who is this prostitute? This Babylon the Great? Is she money? Islam? ... She's riding a beast that sounds familiar. A red beast with seven heads... Satan right? ... The angel goes on to explain. He used to be, at the time John received the revelation, the beast was "not", and in the future he will be released from the Abyss. But there is more to this picture. The heads represent hills and kings... Rome and Babylon were both called "the city built on seven hills". Oh, way too many kings who were and aren't and will be for me to follow... can you follow it? Oh, wait, the woman is a city... Babylon? But that's destroyed at the moment... it's a pile of ruins just south of Baghdad. I wonder if it will be rebuilt? Maybe she's just symbolic? What do you think?

Either way, she will be destroyed and the merchants of the world will mourn her passing because they can't make any more money. ([Revelation 18](#))

And then in [Revelation 19](#) we read of a final battle. Yeshua, king of kings and lord of lords rides out in battle to destroy all his enemies and establish his kingdom. We read about this in the previous article right? Is this what we read in Zechariah 14, and Daniel 2? Is this the Day of Yahweh? Is this the end of life as we know it?

1,000 Years of Peace

Satan is thrown into the Abyss for a thousand years, while Yeshua rules the planet from Jerusalem, and people go up year after year to worship him there. ([Revelation 20](#)). Those who had refused the mark of the beast come to life and reign with him.

But then, at the end of that time, Satan is released to have one last go. One last battle. The real war to end all wars. Satan gathers people from all over the planet, and even after a thousand years of peace with Yeshua as their king, people, mankind, will still want to follow Satan instead and fight against God. Incredible.

But there is no battle. God has no time for playing around now. You chose your side. You lost. Game over. In the end God reveals it for what it was all the time... no comparison. All along it looked like God and Satan were fighting for control of the universe, but that was all part of the plan so that God could get us to this place. So God could show his incredible power one time and reveal that it was no contest. It turns out it that Satan had no power at all.

This is the important message for us as Christians. Not all the details of who and when, but that there is a very secure and definite future for us and it is not negotiable, it is not in jeopardy. It is definite.

And then?

[Revelation 21, 22](#) tell of a new heaven and a new earth. A new Jerusalem where there is a river of life, and where the Lamb will live. This is where we will spend eternity. No more sin, no more crying. Just a perfect life on a perfect planet. Eternal communion with God and each other, the way it was meant to be when God created this earth and the garden of Eden thousands of years ago.

There are of course, more passages in the Bible which relate to end times. But they all reinforce this one message. The end is coming sometime, but nobody knows when. And when it does, it will be definitive and final. God will have complete victory and his people will live at peace with him for eternity.

But I wonder if we'll still be living here when it happens...