

Revelation - Part 3 - Lecture 6

When Does the Tribulation Begin?

Kay Arthur

Click following for literal chapter by chapter chart summary of:

Revelation 4-10

Revelation 11-16

Revelation 17-19

Revelation 20-22

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1. [Revelation - Pt 1](#) - Revelation 1-3, 10 lessons
2. [Revelation - Pt 2](#) - Revelation 4-22, 12 lessons
3. [Revelation - Pt 3](#) - Revelation 4-22, 11 lessons
4. [Revelation - Pt 4](#) - Revelation 4-22, 14 lessons

If you can find a local Precept class studying Revelation, I would strongly encourage you to join the class, as I know of no other study available anywhere in the world that will equip you so thoroughly to discern the signs of the times and cause you to live expectantly as you look for Christ's Return!

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Kay Arthur

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That's a question we need to go to the word of God to find the answer.

Why? You have been taught that there will be 7 years of tribulation and those 7 years will be divided into two 3½ year periods. We

are told of the 7 years in Daniel 9 where we see the 70th week of Daniel in Da 9:27. The 70th week equates with a 7 year period which is broken into 2 each composed of 3½ years. What you may have heard or been taught is that this 7 year period is called 'the tribulation'. So what you have in the first 3½ years is "the tribulation" and the last 3½ years is the '**great tribulation**'. This is a common teaching but when you study the Bible inductively and see what God's word has to say sometimes you have to do a little adjusting. You may be saying "If you are going to tell me that I have to adjust that, then I am not going to listen." But just relax and listen because you don't want to be wrong because you will be held accountable. Let's look at the word '**tribulation**' in Revelation and let Scripture interpret Scripture.

THE USE OF 'TRIBULATION' IN THE REVELATION :

To the church at Thyatira, and to the woman Jezebel and to those who commit adultery with her.

Rev 2:22 *'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.'*

Note the text does not say 'THE' great tribulation but it just says into 'great tribulation'.

Tribulation: Greek = **thlipsis** which means crushing or pressing. **Thlipsis** refers to any affliction that comes upon a person and is illustrated in Jesus' admonition to His disciples:

Jn 16:33 *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."*

Tribulation is also used to refer to a very specific time. When tribulation is used in the letter to Thyatira, the word could be referring to THE great tribulation or it could refer to that judgment on the woman and those who commit fornication with her and they are going to have great tribulation. The churches may not be 7 literal churches in Rev 2-3, but in fact representative of messages to all the churches down through the ages until 'the church' is removed or until Jesus Christ comes for His bride. So if it is a reference to all the churches that are living until this tribulation period comes upon the earth then it could be that what Jesus is saying is that any church that is like the church Thyatira, those that are overcoming, keeping His deeds He will not judge but those that are committing adultery with this woman will be taken through great tribulation.

LETTER TO CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA:

The word tribulation is not used here but the message is relevant to our discussion. This message again seems to imply that although there were 7 literal churches that existed at that time, they are messages to the churches down through the ages that are living until Revelation 4, where we see the things that take place 'after these things', after the churches.

Rev 3:10 "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.

When that HOUR comes we are told that Philadelphia is not going to be there. And we know that this church no longer exists. But there are churches today that bear the same characteristics of the church at Philadelphia. And we also know that each letter to the 7 churches ends this way: 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'. So as Jesus speaks to each individual church He is also speaking to all the churches.

REVELATION CHAPTER 4 DEFINES A CHANGE OF FOCUS:

Rev 4:1 "After these things (as Rev 1:19 summarizes, this means after the things John had mentioned in chapter 1 and then after the things which are in chapters 2-3) I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Write the following verse next to Rev 4:1 as it summarizes the book

Rev 1:19 "Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which

shall take place after these things."

In Rev 4 & 5 John is caught up to heaven to see those things are going to happen after these things and he sees God sitting on the throne with a 7 sealed scroll in His hand. So John cries out because no one is found worthy to take that scroll and break the seals until finally there comes forth the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb that has been slain, Jesus Christ, Who takes the scroll. In Rev 6 Jesus breaks 6 seals. In Rev 7 we have 2 groups of people, 144,000 Jews that are sealed before the earth can be harmed. Once they we sealed the trumpet comes that brings judgment on the trees, the sea, the rivers, the sun, moon and stars and then we see the locusts and an army. So before all of that happens we have this group of 144,000 sealed

WE ALSO HAVE ANOTHER GROUP OF PEOPLE IN REVELATION 7:

Rev 7.9-17 "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." 13 And one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and from where have they come?" 14 And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. 16 "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes."

We can't tell from Rev 7 how this **'great multitude'** die, but we do know that they came out of **The Great Tribulation** and that these are **believers** because they have wash their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb and for this reason they are before the throne worshiping God. We know in all probability that these people were afflicted by the sun, by thirst, by hunger and now they are before the Shepherd and they are drinking of the water of life.

These are two of the places **'TRIBULATION'** is used in the book of Revelation (ED COMMENT: For accuracy note that there is one other verse that uses ['thlipsis'](#) Rev 1:9 "I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the **tribulation** and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.")

THE QUESTION IS THEN 'WHEN IS THE GREAT TRIBULATION?'

If the great multitude are mentioned in Rev 7, then this would be chronologically between the 6th and 7th seal. Or is it the "great tribulation" that this great multitude comes out of the first 6 seals? Or is John showing us what comes before it comes, what is yet future?

"GIVENS" IN REVELATION

Rev 8:1 And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them.

1st Trumpet: 1/3 of earth & trees, all green grass burned.

2nd Trumpet: 1/3 sea > blood

3rd Trumpet: 1/3 of streams/rivers > bitter

4th Trumpet: 1/3 of sun, moon, & stars > dark.

So to help remember the trumpets think:

1/3, 1/3, 1/3

5th-7th Trumpet = 3 Woes

Rev 8:13 And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Rev 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth LOCUSTS (1st Woe) upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

5th Trumpet = 1st Woe: Lasts for 5 months.

6th Trumpet = 2nd Woe:

Rev 9:12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things. 13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

So then we know that we have progression in time ... after the first Woe come two more woes.

Rev 10:7 "but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets."

When the 7th Angel sounds = MYSTERY OF GOD is FINISHED

In Rev 9:13 we see that at the 6th Trumpet 1/3 of mankind is killed

A KEY TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE TRIBULATION IN REVELATION 11

Rev 11:1 And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 "And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for **forty-two months**."

3 ½ Years = Time, times, and half a time = 42 months = 1260 days

The Jews reckoned 360 days to a year not 365 days. We don't know whether the 42 months precede or follow the 7th Trumpet.

Rev 11:3 "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy **forty-two hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth... 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb... 11 And after the three and a half days the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them... 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them."

The 6th Trumpet (2nd Woe) has already sounded. We know these events have taken place because in

Rev 11:14 THE SECOND WOE IS PAST; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

We know then that the 2 WITNESSES are caught up to heaven when the 2nd Woe is passed. So on your chart **between the 6th and 7th Trumpet** you want to put an "upward pointing arrow" next to "2 witnesses". So we know from this time back there are 3½ years but we don't know how far back in terms of the other events mentioned in the Seals and first 6 trumpets. When the 2 witnesses are caught up we know that there is a BEAST on the earth, and he kills them when no one else could and this causes the whole world to rejoice.

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign."

Next to Rev 11:15 write **THE MYSTERY OF GOD IS FINISHED**.

What is the Mystery? One aspect is that GOD BEGINS TO REIGN. This is an ACTIVE reigning as the following verses show:

Rev 11:18 "And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

Between the **6th and 7th Trumpet** is a very significant time. After the 6th Trumpet sounds, you know that there is a **Beast** on earth, that the **2 witnesses** who have been witnessing for 3.5 years are killed, that when the **7th Trumpet sounds** the **mystery of God is finished** and God begins to reign.

Go back to:

Rev 6.16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for THE GREAT DAY OF THEIR WRATH HAS COME and who is able to stand?'

So under the 6th Seal is a proclamation: THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH HAS COME. The Greek tense of 'has come' is Aorist Active Indicative. Aorist tense is "timeless" and does not specify by itself whether the action is past or not.

John Sproul a Greek expert says that '**has come**' in Rev 6.17 could be a constative and speaks of a past action. So constative aorist speaks of a past action. Therefore in Rev 6.17 '**has come**' would speak to an action that preceded this seal. In other words, the great day of His wrath has ALREADY COME. If the verb is a dramatic aorist, then the tense is indecisive, so that when it occurs is indecisive. Paul Finberg, professor of Greek, says it could be an ingressive aorist, which means that it is an action which has just entered, so that when this 6th seal happened, they have just entered into this action. Finberg says on the other hand it could be a dramatic aorist, which is like a future tense and it is about to begin. So **HAS COME** could mean that action has already taken place, that it is just starting right now or it could mean that it is about to take place. So let's just leave it there for now.

REV 12 TALKS ABOUT SATAN GETTING KICKED OUT OF HEAVEN

Rev 12:10: And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

Why has the salvation, power & kingdom of our God come? For one thing Satan has been cast down. When it says the 'kingdom of our God ... has come' it parallels Rev 11:15 where God has begun to reign.

Rev 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman (ISRAEL) who gave birth to the male child. 14 And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was[^] nourished for a **time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent.

WHEN SATAN IS CAST DOWN WHAT HAPPENS?

The **woman** (Israel) runs into the wilderness. Kay believes that when the two witnesses go up, and when the 6th Trumpet is sounded and when the 7th Trumpet sounds you have Satan being cast to earth. And when Satan is cast to earth, he knows that he only has short time, so he persecutes the woman, Israel, in a general way but he also persecutes a specific group in Judea (referring to Mt 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains"), the Jews who are living in Israel at that time. But there are more Jews living elsewhere in the world and these are "Israel's offspring."

Rev 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with **the rest of her offspring**, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Mat 24:31 says that when Jesus comes that His angels will "GATHER TOGETHER **His elect** from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.'

So Satan's persecution is worldwide as it says in Rev 13 where the beast persecutes the saints for **42 months**, where the 'saints' are the Jews. The whole world hates the Jews and those that dwell on the earth worship the beast.

THE BEAST IN REVELATION 13

Rev 13:5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for **forty-two months** was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him (**worldwide domination**).

HOW LONG DOES THE BEAST HAVE AUTHORITY TO ACT? 42 MONTHS

Rev 13:8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.... 14 And he (2nd Beast = false prophet) deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

In Rev 13:16-17 he puts a mark on everyone and without the mark they cannot buy or sell.

GOD BEGINS TO REIGN AT THE 7th TRUMPET

Satan, the Dragon, is cast down and gives his power to the Beast for 42 months or 3.5. When is the beast brought to his end? When Christ returns. So from the 7th Trumpet all the way down to the 2nd Coming would be 3.5 years because the beast has authority to act for 3.5 years, but when Christ comes in Rev 19:11-16 He conquers the beast and throws him into the Lake of fire along with the false prophet. (Rev 19:20)

MATTHEW 24

"The Olivet Discourse"

Review: Disciples asked Jesus the sign of the Temple being torn down and the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (Mt 24:3). In Mt 24, Jesus does not answer about when the Temple would be destroyed, but He does answer about **THE END**.

Mt 24:6: "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet **THE END**. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 But all these things are merely **the beginning of birth pangs**."

Mt 24:9 **"Then** they will deliver you (Jews) to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 And at that time (then) many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to **THE END**, he shall be saved. 14 And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then **THE END** shall come.

We saw in Rev 14:6-7 that the **Gospel** will be preached to all the world and then **the end** comes.

Rev 14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an **eternal Gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people** 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Kay believers that when Jesus says **these are merely the beginning of birth pangs** (Mt 24:8), that from the 6th TRUMPET back is THE BEGINNING OF BIRTH PANGS. **Then** the Jews are delivered to **Tribulation** (Mt 24:9).

What do we know from Revelation about when the Jews will be delivered to Tribulation?

When Satan is cast down (Rev 12:10), we know that he persecutes the Jews for 3.5 years (time, times and half a time = Rev 12:14, cf Rev 12:6 - "the woman" = Israel).

Mt 24:9 says **"THEN they will deliver you to tribulation"**.

Does this **tribulation** refer to a general **tribulation** or to a specific time period? It does not say **the tribulation** or the **'great tribulation'**. But we know that after they are delivered to **Tribulation** and lawlessness increases and they are hated and the gospel is preached, **THEN THE END** comes. **When does THE END come?** When Jesus Christ comes down to earth ... that is **THE END OF THE AGE**.

Mt 24:15 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place(let the reader understand), 16 then LET THOSE WHO ARE IN JUDEA FLEE to the mountains; 17 let

him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 19 But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! 20 But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; 21 for then there will be a **GREAT TRIBULATION**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.

SO WHEN DOES THE GREAT TRIBULATION BEGIN?

When the **Abomination of Desolation** stands in the Holy Place. Who is this **Abomination of Desolation**? It is the Beast of Revelation 13 (**Ed**: Some feel it is the Image of the Beast - Rev 13:14-15). Remember that at the 7th Trumpet when the Kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is when the Antichrist goes into the Temple declaring himself to be God (2Th 2:4, cf Da 9:27).

Mt 24:29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken,³⁰ and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

So you have the Abomination of Desolation initiating a time of Great Tribulation which lasts until the coming of the Son of God.

DANIEL 9:24-27

(Click here for Kay's Lectures on Daniel 9: Lecture 14, Lecture 15, Lecture 16)

(Click additional in depth notes on Daniel 9:24-27: Daniel 9:24; Daniel 9:25; Daniel 9:26; Daniel 9:27)

This is the incredible prophecy of 70 WEEKS (literally "sevens") of years or 490 years:

Da 9:24 (note)

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people (JEWS) and your holy city (JERUSALEM),
to finish the transgression (THE JEWS HAD TRANSGRESSED GOD'S LAW),
to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity (TO PAY FOR THE SINS OF THE JEWS),
to bring in everlasting righteousness,
to seal up vision and prophecy (TO COMPLETE IT), and
to anoint the most holy place (THE TEMPLE NOT THE HOLY "ONE").

Da 9:25 (note)

So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (OF ARTAXERXES IN Neh 2:1-8 IN 444/445 BC)
until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (THE JEWS COULD HAVE KNOWN WHEN THEIR MESSIAH WAS TO COME);
it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

Da 9:26 (note)

Then after the sixty-two weeks (Seven "7's" + sixty-two "7's" or 483 years) the Messiah will be cut off (CRUCIFIXION) and have nothing,
and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city (JERUSALEM) and the sanctuary (THE TEMPLE – DESTROYED IN 70 AD BY THE ROMANS).
And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined (SUFFERING FOR THE JEWS WOULD OCCUR UNTIL THE END OF THIS AGE – THE CRUSADES OF THE MIDDLE AGES, THE RUSSIAN POGROMS, HITLER'S "FINAL SOLUTION", ETC).

Da 9:27 (note)

And he (THE ANTICHRIST, THE BEAST OF REVELATION 13) will make a firm covenant with the many (THE JEWS) for one week (ONE SEVEN YEAR PERIOD),

but in the middle of the week (SEVEN YEARS OR AT 3 1/2 YEARS) he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering (WHICH INDICATES THERE IS A REBUILT JEWISH TEMPLE);

and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate (ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION DESCRIBED BY JESUS IN , Mt 24:15-note)

even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

The reason people have said that the 70th Week of Daniel is the TRIBULATION is because they just assumed that is what it was. But nowhere in the Word of God is that tribulation period referred to in a time phrase except as 3.5 years.

So at the beginning of the week the Antichrist makes a covenant with the Jews and they can worship God in their temple. In the middle of the 7 year period he walks into the Temple and he puts a stop to sacrifice and grain offering. We know that when the 2 witnesses of Rev 11 are witnessing, there is a Temple on earth. And the court outside the Temple is not measured because the Gentiles are trampling it down for 3.5 years.

We know that the Beast declares himself to be God and that he is the Abomination of Desolation that stands in the Holy Place. He has made a covenant with the Jews for 3.5 years and how far back in the seals and trumpets this goes we don't know but we do know that in the middle of that 7 year period, the Antichrist declares himself to be God and stops the sacrifices and offerings because they are offering to a God that he says does not exist. He sets up his kingdom and begins to persecute the Jews and continues to do so until THE END. By THE END, the Jew's transgression has been finished and atonement for iniquity has already been made because of Jesus' death on the Cross. The Jews are brought to an end of sin as Daniel 9:24 predicted. The most Holy Place is anointed because Jesus comes to earth and the Temple which was desecrated has been anointed by the Most Holy One because the King has come.

We will continue looking at Daniel and 2 Thessalonians next and it will all fit together.