

Revelation 9

Chapter 8 closes with an angel flying through Heaven pronouncing three “woes” upon the “inhabiters of the earth”. This angel knows that the plagues unleashed by the sounding of the last three trumpets will be far more horrible than anything we have witnessed yet.

These things are mentioned so the church will know what we have been saved from. It is important to know that God will deliver His people from this kind of judgment. Also, God gives us this glimpse of the future as a warning to those who have not trusted Jesus as their Savior. He wants them to know what they will face if they continue on in their sin and in their rejection of Him. In addition, so those of us who know the truth that we might be motivated to share the Gospel with the lost.

Read pages 105-107 (top half)

1 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss.

Read pages 107 (bottom half)- 109 (top half) in book.

The author states that the “star” is not Satan, the fallen angel, but one of God’s angels because he is given a key to the Abyss by God, and the author believes that God would not give His divine key to a demon. However, I believe that the “star” from heaven that has fallen to Earth is Satan himself---the leader of all the fallen angels (Luke 10:18). God will use Satan to unleash His wrath upon mankind.

Some try to link this star here with the star of Rev. 8:10-11. However, the star in Chapter 8, is an inanimate object while the star in Chapter 9 is an angelic being (Job 38:7). Inanimate objects are not given keys. The Devil has a name. His name is “Lucifer”, (Isa. 14:12). The name “Lucifer” means “Brilliant star; “Light-bearer,” or “Shining one”. Satan, though a fallen angel, still has access to the presence of God where he accuses us before God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). In fact, he is the “*prince of the power of the air*”, (Eph. 2:2). But, there will come a day when Satan will be eternally cast down to the earth,(Rev. 12:10). So, here we see Satan, cast out of Heaven and forced to confine his activities to the earth. (Remember to think cyclical and not linear).

Satan is given the authority to unlock a terrible prison (Abyss) and unleash a horrific plague upon the world. We were told in Rev. 1:18 that Jesus has the keys of “***death and of Hell***”. For a short time, the keys/power over the demonic spirits imprisoned in Hell is given to Satan. Satan will one day be sent to Hell to join the other imprisoned evil spirits, (Rev. 20:10). When he goes, he will go as a prisoner and not as a ruler. He hates the thought of Hell, but he will be punished there throughout eternity.

Why would God allow a being like him to have the power and freedom that he does? Why is Satan allowed to roam the Earth and cause destruction (1 Pet. 5:8). Maybe to give us a choice to choose good or evil, Jesus or Satan. We do know that one day his days will be eternally over.

2 When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

In this verse, Satan takes the key he has been given and he uses it to open the door to Hell. One turn of the key and Hell is unleashed upon the earth. This verse has some things to say about that place called Hell. It is called a "bottomless pit". The word "bottomless" gives us our word "abyss". It refers to a very deep chasm. When Satan turns his key and opens the pit, he is literally opening the shaft that leads into Hell itself.

What is hell? Hell is the eternal destiny for those not saved (Rev. 20:11-15). Contrasting sharply with the glorious future that awaits each and every believer, the fate of the non-believer is simply too horrifying to imagine. It is a place that no one should ever want to go. It is a place no one has to go!

To deny the existence hell does not make it so. It is interesting to note that 58% of Americans believe in hell, but only 6% actually believe they are going there. It may also be interesting to note that Jesus said more about hell than He did Heaven. The Bible clearly states that those who reject Christ and do not have their names written in the Book of Life (Rev. 20:14), and their final destiny is hell.

Those who die without Christ go at once to the place of torment in Sheol or Hades, as Jesus indicated in (Luke 16). It is there they await their final judgment (Rev. 20), (2 Pet. 2:9). We must remember that hell was not created for mankind, but for Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

What words are used in the Bible to speak of hell? In the Old Testament "Sheol" is the word used the most. It is considered the place where the body goes after death awaiting final judgment (Ps. 16:10; 86:13). In the New Testament there are three words used for hell.

(1) Gehenna - Used twelve times mostly in the gospels by Jesus Christ Himself (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47; Lk. 12:5; James 3:6). It is always associated with fire and torment and is used to speak of the eternal destiny of lost people.

(2) Hades - Used eleven times in the New Testament. (Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Lk. 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Cor. 15:55; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14). NASB always translates it as "Hades" while the NIV sometimes translates it as "death," "the grave," and "Hades." It is translated "the grave" where the translators felt that it was a quote from the Old Testament and where the word "Sheol" was used. Hades refers to the temporary residence of the persons awaiting final judgment.

(3) Tartarus - Used one time in the New Testament in (2 Pet. 2:4). Tartarus was the Greek name for the mythological abyss where rebellious gods were confined. Its usage in (2 Peter) is that of the holding place for the angels who left their first estate (Gen. 6:2, 4). This is what I believe Satan was given the keys to. These angels are awaiting judgment. Luke 8:31 teaches us the truth that the demons fear being sent to the abyss. Rev. 11:7 tells us the Beast, the Antichrist, will ascend out of this place. Meanwhile the fallen angels are bound there and Satan himself will spend eternity in Hell.

What is the main difference between Hades and Gehenna? The main difference seems to be that Hades is the temporary residence of the persons awaiting final judgment while Gehenna is used to refer to the place of final judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). In New Testament times, the rabbis used the word Gehenna to refer to the place of final punishment. Jesus maintained this meaning in the Gospels as well. Gehenna is a place of fire - (Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mk. 9:43-48), a place of eternal fire - (Mk. 9:43-48), a place of eternal

torment - (Matt. 13:42; 22:13) (Rev. 20:10), a place of punishment - (Matt. 25:46), and a place of darkness - (Matt. 8:12; 22:13). In hell there is not even the hope of dying to alleviate pain. (Luke 12:5)

Gehenna is derived from the name of the "Valley of Ben Hinnon". From the abbreviated Hebrew name for this place "ge'hinnom" we get the term "Gehenna," which is consistently translated in the New Testament as "hell", the place of fiery punishment for all those who die without Christ. The Valley of Ben Hinnon, or Gehenna, was an evil place of child sacrifice, (2 Kings 23:10). Eventually, this valley came to be used as a trash dump where all the trash of Jerusalem, and dead animals and criminals were brought. The fire in this valley was constantly smoldering, and where maggots also worked constantly. To paint a picture of what hell would be like Jesus referred to this place in (Mark 9:48).

People joke about Hell and try to pass it off as silly superstition, but Hell is real and wise people make their preparations to avoid its flames. You may not believe that a good, gracious God will allow you to go to Hell. My advice to you is run to Jesus and be saved!

3 And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.

When the abyss is opened a demonic plague spews out onto the earth. The demons that have been held there for judgment, (2 Pet. 2:4), are released to carry out their mission according to God's plan.

They are described as locusts, but these demons are no insects. The term "locusts" is probably used as a description of their great numbers. One locust swarm reported in 1889 covered over 2,000 square miles. The image here is of an innumerable host of demons being allowed to ascend out of Hell onto the earth. There are a couple of other reasons why I say that these are not real locusts.

4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

They are not real locusts because they do not harm plant life, but they torment humans. They are given power to sting like a scorpion. Scorpion stings are known to be very painful. They cause swelling and numbness, but they are rarely fatal in humans. So, these demonic beings are allowed out of Hell, and they have the power to cause great pain to people. But, they will only sting those who are unsaved. The 144,000 and other believers are protected from the attacks of this great horde of Hell.

5 They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. 6 During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

When this attack comes, people will not be killed, but they will be tormented for five months. The pain inflicted upon people will be unimaginable. Every moment of every day that demon will be there, tormenting, stinging, causing pain and suffering. There will be no escape! People will seek every way they can to escape the torment of these demons, but nothing will help them.

No pills, no alcohol and no drugs will deaden the pain. For five long months they will suffer and they will find no relief from their suffering. In our day, people flee death. They do everything they can to hold off death, but in that day people will pursue death in an effort to be free from their pain. People will leap from buildings, and still not be able to die. People will drink deadly poisons and not be able to escape. Others will place guns to their temples and attempt to kill themselves, but they will only succeed in adding more misery to their torment. People may try to kill their loved ones to help them escape, but to no avail. For five months there will be no funerals on earth. Death will take a holiday while men endure the pain and suffering inflicted on them by this demonic invasion. In those days people will seek death but will not find it.

While they cannot die, they will be given an opportunity to repent and embrace the Gospel preached by the 144,000 Jews, the Two Witnesses, and other believers. The five months will be their last opportunity to repent and believe (9:20-21) (16:9,11).

7 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. 8 Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. 10 They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. 11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).

Here we have a more vivid description of this demonic army. (See also page 108/109 in book)

1. v. 7 Horses prepared to battle – They resemble mighty war horses, prepared for battle, straining at the bit.
2. v. 7 Golden crowns on their heads – They are wearing victors' crowns symbolizing they will be indestructible. They come to the earth as conquerors. For five long, awful months, these demons reign on the earth. No weapon can harm them.
3. v. 7 Faces like those of men – This speaks of their intelligence. These beings are intelligent and rational.
4. v. 8 Hair like a woman – They are attractive to people. It may be that they have some seductive charm by which they lure their victims to them. People have always been attracted to the occult. Just look at the popularity of so-called psychics, the current fascination with angels, etc.
5. v. 8 Teeth like a lion – They will be fierce and powerful tearing their victims apart.
6. v. 9 Breastplates of iron – Again, symbolizing they are invulnerable to attack. Men will try to kill these demons, but that will be impossible.
7. v. 9 Wings that sound like chariots – This implies swiftness. They will be able to surround and capture their prey with ease. Men will attempt to run, but there can be no escape.
8. v. 10 Stings in their tails – We have already touched on their capability to inflict pain. It is mentioned here to emphasize the fact that the pain and torment of men is their sole objective.

9. v. 11 They have a king over them – Unlike real locusts, these demons have a king over them. Some try to identify this king as Satan, but Satan is not cast into the Abyss until Rev. 20:1-3. This king is better viewed as a high-ranking demon in Satan’s hierarchy. They will be organized and united in their attacks upon humanity. The fact that this king’s name is given in Hebrew and Greek shows us that all unbelievers, both Jew and Gentile, will be targeted by this demonic invasion.

12 The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

The Sixth Trumpet

13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. 14 It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” 15 And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind.

Read page 109 in book,

When that trumpet sounds a voice is heard to speak from between the horns of the golden altar. The mention of this altar reminds us of the golden altar of incense that was in the tabernacle and the temple. The golden altar was where incense was burned as an offering to God.

These angels have been kept bound until a specific period of time. It tells us that they are fallen angels since they are bound. God is going to use them for His Own purposes as He judges the earth, just as He used the demons in the Abyss.

The Euphrates River is one of the most prominent in the Word of God. It was here that God planted the Garden of Eden, (Gen. 2:14). It was here that God made mankind, the first sin; and the first rebellion against the Word of God occurred here.

Death that had taken a 5-month reprieve will now come back with a vengeance and billions will die (1/3 of mankind) at the hand of these four fallen angels!

16 The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. 17 The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. 18 A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. 19 The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

We are told that this army will number “***twice ten thousand times ten thousand***”. One commentator stated that, “we are talking about an army of 200,000,000 men! We are talking about an army of immense proportions! Someone has calculated that an army that large could line up in a formation 1

mile wide and 87 miles long! Just a few generations ago an army of that size was almost incomprehensible. Today, it is not just a possibility; it is a stark reality.”

v. 17-19 The Symbolism Of This Army – As we read this description of this vast army, one of the questions that arises is whether this army is human or demonic. I believe that we are looking at a human army that is demonically controlled and energized. They are men, but they are men who march under the banner of Hell. They are humans, but they are humans under the control and direction of Satan and His demons.

The language used to describe these soldiers. It is the language of symbolism and it is, first of all, language that is descriptive of Hell. The men have breastplates of fire and brimstone. The colors, red, blue and yellow. These are all the colors of fire. These are colors associated with the torments of Hell itself. Their horses breathe fire, smoke and brimstone. Again, these bring to mind images of Hell and its torments. Hell will be a place of smoke, of fire and of brimstone. These soldiers come with the colors of Hell; the smell of Hell; the weapons of Hell and the energy of Hell. It is a picture of an army controlled by Hell.

There is also language that is used to describe things that are indescribable. John is trying to use First Century language to describe a Twenty-First Century army. As we look at the descriptions John gives us of these men, their horses and their methods of killing, it seems to me that he is trying to describe a scene for which he did not have the right vocabulary.

1. Faces like Lions – This may indicate that their horses, or whatever vehicles they ride, are fierce looking.
2. Men are killed by the smoke, fire and brimstone that issue from the mouths of these beasts – Could this be a description of tanks, rockets, machine guns, flame throwers, etc.
3. These beasts are said to have power in their heads and in their tails to kill and do damage – This brings to mind images of helicopters, missiles, warheads, etc.

(See page 110 in book, top half of page)

Regardless of how you interpret these words, one thing is clear. It will be a terrible time of destruction, death and demonic activity. I praise the Lord for the fact that I will not be here when these events come to pass!

20 The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk.21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

We are told very clearly that these demons unleash a vast army upon the earth. One-third of all the people living on the earth will be killed. You would think that death and destruction on that scale would cause people to look within their hearts and, acknowledge their sins and turn in repentance toward God.

However, those who survive the carnage continue on in their sins, refusing to repent. These verses are a clear X-Ray of the condition of the human heart. Mankind at this point is totally depraved.

We are created as religious creature. Regardless of where you go in this world you will find people engaged in worship of someone or some thing. We are born with a God-shaped void in our hearts. People from the darkest jungles of Africa and South America, to the highest mountains in Asia, to the great cities of Europe, and America, you will find people engaged in worship. Every culture, whether it is primitive or advanced, has some involvement with worship. Even the atheist worships. He merely directs his worship toward himself.

This passage tells us that religion in the Tribulation Period will be marked by the worship of demons and by the worship of material things. People will be caught up in the worship of the occult. There is an increase in our day in the interest in the occult. Movies, music and other popular media provide an opportunity for many to learn more about the devil, demons and Satanism. Witchcraft is becoming more popular than ever, and the numbers of practicing witches is increasing at an astonishing rate. All of this is leading toward the day when mankind will worship demons. People suffering begin to seek answers and help for their problems in the world of the occult. It then moves into the area of enslavement. If you reject God and His Son Jesus, then you have nothing left but Satan!

Many will be worshipping gods like those of ancient Israel, (Psa. 115:1-8; Jer. 10:3-6.) People during the Tribulation will also give worship to gods of their own creation. They will worship "**idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk**". This may people will worship their money, car, home, and possessions. Their worship of these things will not benefit them at all, just as it will not benefit us now.

v. 21 shows us how depraved mankind is. It seems that there will be a significant increase in wickedness in that day. John uses four words to describe the moral condition of the sinners living during the Tribulation.

1. Murders – It is hard to imagine a civilization being more murderous than our own. Hardly a day goes by without us hearing about several murders here in America. Large towns and small (Uvalde), no place is immune from the blight of murder. People kill others out of hatred or lust every day. These are people who will kill someone they do not even know. They are killing total strangers for their own perverted reasons. They kill for thrills.

We are not far from this today. Abortionists commit murder every day and they are protected by the laws of America! More babies have been sacrificed on the altar of convenience and personal rights than the total number of people killed in all the concentration camps of Nazi Germany! Why are things this way? We have taught people that we are descendants from apes, rather than in the image of God. We have taught a generation that there is no God to be accountable. We have taught this generation that every person has the ability to determine what is right and wrong for himself. Our children are raised up on a steady diet of godless humanism and they have no thought for the rights and respect of others. Just look at how rude and violent people have become! This passage teaches us that the Tribulation will be marked by murders. Apparently, the violence of mankind will increase after the removal of the church.

2. Sorceries – The word “sorceries” comes from the word “pharmakeia”. You recognize that word; we get the modern word “pharmacy” from it. There will also be a rise in drug abuse. We are seeing this take place right before our eyes. Our world is busy seeking an escape hatch from its problems through the use of mind-altering drugs. This trend will increase as we move through these last days. It will reach pandemic proportions during the Tribulation

3. Fornication – This is translated from the Greek word “porneia”. It gives us our modern word “pornography”. It is a word that was used in that day to refer to every kind of illicit, sexual sin. It covers every type of sexual activity that mankind can be engaged in. Our country has already seen the “free love” movement and the “love ins” of the hippies. We have been through the “sexual revolution”. We have witnessed the day when things that were not even discussed in public are as common on our television screens as a Coca-Cola commercial. Cable, satellite and the Internet pipe endless streams of pornography into our homes. Children who are allowed to watch television without adult supervision know more about sex by the age of seven than most of us knew when we got married! Our society is saturated by sex. Mankind has taken a beautiful gift from God and perverted it. God designed sex to be exercised within the framework of the marriage relationship. Any sexual expression that takes place outside a marriage relationship involving one man and one woman is a sin and it will be judged by God. Nothing wrong with a fire contained in a fireplace. Outside of protective walls it is destructive. Sex outside of God’s protective walls is destructive as well. Sexual perversion will increase as we move into the last days.

4. Thefts – The personal rights and property of others will have no meaning at all. We are already seeing this trend in our society, as a segment of our population believes that it is their right to take what they want when they want from whomever they can get it from. Example catalytic Converters. This attitude will increase in the last days and will reach terrible proportions during the Tribulation. As food, water, medicine clothing and shelter become increasingly scarce; people will take what they want.

The Bible paints a bleak picture of the events of the Tribulation Period. There will be death and violence on an unprecedented level throughout the world. Yet, in the midst of it all, people will continue to harden their hearts to the Gospel of Christ and will continue their headlong plunge into the fires of Hell.

Right now, we need to do everything in our power to reach them with the Gospel. No sacrifice is too great; no distance too far; no expense too much and no effort is wasted in the work of reaching people for Jesus. If you know of lost loved ones let’s pray for them right now.