

## Revelation 9:1-21

### “Repentance Refused, Rebellion Remains”

We enter the text at a time of unparalleled tribulation, devastation & destruction upon planet earth. God is pouring out His wrath upon a world that has refused reconciliation to Himself through the blood of J.C... & If you won't receive *reconciliation* through His grace, then what's left but to be subjected to the *vindication* of His righteousness?

It'll be a time unlike the world has ever known before nor will ever know again as the necessary acts taking place in *heaven* bring about corresponding events on *earth*. You can grab previous studies if you like but suffice it to say for now that what will take place has become known as the “seal” judgments, the “trumpet” judgments & the “bowl” judgments. Thus far we've seen the seal judgments & we're in the midst of the trumpet judgments.

We've seen in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne a scroll sealed w/7 seals... The Lamb of God, Jesus Himself (being the only One [over all things created] worthy to apprehend the scroll) stepped forward to take the scroll & to loose it's seals. And 1 by 1 we watched w/great anticipation & a looming expectation as the seals were loosed & judgment took place on the earth, false peace followed by warfare, famine, disease & death. By the time seal # 6 is opened it would appear as though Jesus Himself was poised & prepared to return to planet earth as people small & great were hiding in caves & rocks of the earth crying out, “Fall on us & hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne & from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come & who is able to stand?”

Then Ch 7 came & it was as though we hit the pause button, rewind a little bit to see that prior to all of that taking place that 144,000 men (12,000 of the 12 tribes of Israel) were sealed by God that no harm should befall them. & They set out (seemingly) to evangelize the earth & there's a great multitude that we see in heaven there in Ch 7 who come out of the great tribulation, they're tribulation saints.

Flashing forward to Ch 8 we're brought back to the business of judgment. Seal #7 is opened and an awestruck silence hits the heavenly scene, a hush falls over all of heaven for about 30 minutes...7 angels are handed 7 trumpets & they prepare themselves to sound... Now again people question the *chronology* of these judgments, (do they happen sequentially or thematically, some will question) but none question the *reality* of these judgments.

The 1<sup>st</sup> trumpet sounds, then the 2<sup>nd</sup>, then the 3<sup>rd</sup> & the 4<sup>th</sup>. Hail & fire mingled w/blood, a 1/3 of the trees & all the grass goes up in flames. 1/3 of the sea becomes blood courtesy of some mountain like structure that careens into the ocean destroying a 1/3 of marine life & a 1/3 of the ships of the sea. 1/3 of the earths fresh water supply is polluted to the point that if one drinks of it they will die due to another disintegrating meteorite that seems to fracture as it enters the atmosphere & pollute the fresh waters of the earth. 1/3 of the sun & the moon cease to shine, for a 1/3 of the day & night the earth is plunged into total darkness & 1/3 of the stars cease to shine.

The natural course of nature is being brutalized & pulverized. Yet in Vs 13 we see an angel flying through the noon day sky proclaiming in a loud voice “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the 3 angels who are about to sound!” Translation? “You only *think* it’s been bad, but you ain’t seen nothing yet. The worst is still to come.

Now the transition is made from the natural to the supernatural, there begins an intermingling of the physical realm & the spiritual realm. But as to where the last 3 seals had us focused on *heaven*, the last 3 trumpets will set our sights on *hell*. Suddenly the demonic is unleashed upon the planet & literally we’re caused to consider hell on earth...notice.

### Vs1-2

Thus far we’ve seen more than one “shooting star” in the book of revelation that’s brought about some sort of devastation but here we need to notice something distinctly different. Perhaps you caught it but the context clearly demonstrates that this “star” is not a rock careening through the galaxy that enters our atmosphere in a ball of fire.

This particular star is a *person*; we note that to “him” was given the key, & “he” opened the bottomless pit. You should also note that the word “Fallen” is in the past tense. In the Greek the verb is in the perfect tense meaning that it’s something that happened in the past but carries on even into the present. In other words this person had fallen from heaven previous to what John is seeing here & was continuing in the fallen state at the time John draws our attention to him.

Now, periodically as we travel through the book of revelation we’re compelled to get out our “shaking stick” & see if we can’t shake it at all the theories that people come up w/in trying to interpret the text. Because often times there’s more theories than we can shake a stick at right? 😊

This is one of those passages but if you don't mind I'd like to cut straight to the chase. We believe this fallen star to be none other than Satan himself. I think w/some minimal scriptural searching you'll find that it's not too difficult to discern. For instance leave the book of Revelation, turn back in your bible to the OT book of **Isaiah 14** (Vs 12-15). (Vs 13, "Stars" can be a biblical euphemism or another reference to angels as noted in Job 38:7).

As long as you're there turn to the right in your bible over to the book of **Ezekiel Ch 28** (Vs 12b-17). Jesus said, **"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."** Luke 10:18

Now here he is, the star fallen from heaven to the earth, & he was given the key to the bottomless pit. Of course this is the part that makes us nervous about Satan being this fallen star. Because the thought of Satan having the key to *anything* is unnerving to say the least; why? Because keys in scripture speak of authority. Of course we note that he was *given* the key, currently Jesus holds that key (we learned that back in Vs 18 of Ch 1).

But at this point during the great tribulation God has appointed that having refused the offer of heaven, all hell will break loose on planet earth. People will get a sneak preview of the kind of neighbors they'll have in hell & it's anything but the party that people believe it will be, believe you me.

Now where it speaks of the bottomless pit, more literally the idea there is the "shaft of the abyss", we might consider it *the orifice of hell*. The picture is like unto a well shaft that's covered & locked that leads down into hell itself & evidently it's on earth because when it's opened smoke proceeds out of this shaft and darkens the sun like the ash of a volcanic eruption. **As for whether or not it's a physical shaft that can be located I have my doubts. More than likely it's a spiritual shaft that leads downward toward the center of the earth. It's literal but not physical, it's spiritual.** However since at this point the 2 worlds (natural & supernatural) will be colliding, when Satan is given the authority to open the pit so as to do God's bidding, it opens in the natural realm & all this smoke billows out like the smoke of a great furnace polluting the atmosphere & darkening the sun.

So we wanna put far from us this idea of Satan being the master of hell. Satan doesn't reign over hell, God does! Jesus holds the key, Satan will be hell's primary prisoner, he's not going to "run" any of it; he will be imprisoned in it.

**Vs 3-6**

When we read this it almost sounds science fiction except for the part that it's all fact! Satan will open the bottomless pit that currently (amongst other things) serves as a prison to certain demonic entities & they will be loosed to torment those who dwell on the earth.

Out of this smoke John sees hordes of locusts coming upon the earth. Now they're obviously not "natural" locusts (I suspect they're not actual locusts at all). It would seem to me that this is a visual representation of swarms/hordes of demonic entities that God will allow to invade & torment all those upon the earth whom He has not "sealed". They're given power to sting mankind, they don't feed on natural vegetation as do locusts (they're forbidden to harm vegetation), they prey on humanity (all whom God has not sealed).

But they're not allowed to *kill* mankind, just *torment* them for 5 months. **Again we note the fact that their purpose & the period of time they're given is governed directly by God. God is administering His judgment. We see it all throughout the gospels, the realm of the demonic stands in complete subjection to Christ. God & Satan are not equal opposites, they are created beings, limited in power.** God is the Creator unlimited in power; here we find them limited to the express agenda that's laid out for them. As in the book of Job they're allowed to torture & torment but not to kill.

**As a matter of fact the horror & torment will be so terrifying & terrible that men will want to die, but God will tell death to take a holiday. No one gets to die for 5 months, there will be those people being tormented by these creatures who will attempt suicide but they can't die.** They'll jump from buildings only to lie there writhing in pain w/ every bone broken in their body but they won't die. Some may try to shoot themselves & even if they are successful in putting a bullet through their skull, death will not come to them. These are things of inconceivable proportions.

But here's something I need to state, the idea (in the mind of the unbeliever) of death as an "escape" from pains or problems in this world is complete & total demonic deception. For the believer to be absent from the body is to be present w/the Lord. However for the unbeliever it's a leap from the frying pan (literally) into the fire.

The way of escape from the pains & problems, the depression & devastation found in this world isn't through death; it's through life in Christ. Now is when we make the escape, through repentance toward God & faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Vs 7-10

Again I would point out that what John is describing isn't exactly what he's saying here. The words "as" & "like" are used here more than any other chapter in the bible. "As" or "like" are used no less than 10x's in Vs 3-10. So their shape isn't exactly a horse, it's like a horse in that it's lean, swift, stout, sculpted & muscular. Really all we can do is guess because though John describes what he sees he doesn't interpret the characteristics for us.

It's simply an awesome, supernatural kind of power compared to anything in this world. "Like horses...like gold...humanoid kind of face...like women's hair...like lion's teeth" the impact is one of unnatural yet awesome cruelty & unprecedented torment.

#### Vs 11-12

This is yet 1 more indication that these aren't literal locust. The bible tells us that literal locusts have no king, yet these creatures do. **Proverbs 30:27, "The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks."**

As for the king over these creatures we're given his name: "Abaddon" in the Hebrew, in the Greek it's "Apollyon". In Hebrew it translates "Destruction" in the Greek it translates "Destroyer". Both carry the same thought of destruction &/or torment.

If this angel is the same angel that we found in Vs 1 this would be another name for Satan of whom the bible declares (John 10:10) he came to steal, to kill & to destroy. If it's a separate angel than we would understand him to be Satan's 5 star general so to speak. Either way this guy is bad news.

Now, as we think through these things we're often tempted once again to perhaps wonder if John may be describing modern mechanized warfare in a manner as best as he can. Is he seeing tanks, or helicopters or... Those thoughts may be interesting, but they don't at all fit all the details we have here. It's best to simply read as it does & believe it for what it says. We have here demonic hordes & John is heaping image upon image to force us to feel the absolute terror of this judgment.

Yet for all of this, it only gets worse, notice.

#### Vs 13-15

These 4 angels may or may not have any connection to the 4 angels of Ch 7 Vs 1, it's not necessary that they would. But John hears a voice from the 4 horns of the altar of incense from where the prayers of God's people ascend before His throne & the command is sent forth: "Release the 4 angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

It would seem as though the vast majority of Satan's minions are free, they're the powers & principalities against which we wrestle (Eph 6). However evidently some are so offensive, so terrible that they're incarcerated... 4 of whom we have here. God has reserved them for this this year, this month & this day to be released so that they might be instruments of His judgment.

The question comes up, why are they bound at the Euphrates? It's a great question, the short answer is that no one has any idea.

There's interesting conjecture. We know that the wellspring of the Euphrates was found in Eden (Gen 2). Therefore by default it's associated w/the 1<sup>st</sup> sin, the 1<sup>st</sup> murder, the 1<sup>st</sup> organized revolt against God, the 1<sup>st</sup> dictatorship, the tower of Babel was erected somewhere w/in it's vicinity, idolatry was birthed in that area... Do any of those things relate to why these angels are incarcerated there? I don't know but it's interesting to think through... It marked the border of the land promised to Israel & also served as the boundary of the ancient Roman Empire which will be revived under the rule of the A.C.

Be that as it may it's where these angels are bound & from where they'll be released & their objective is clear; they will kill 1/3 of mankind. The people were longing for death back in Vs 6, in Vs 15 it will be granted w/a vengeance.

Back in Vs 8 of Ch 6 when the 4<sup>th</sup> seal was loosed ¼ of earths population was killed at that time. Now 1/3 of what's left will die so that the death toll on planet earth will equal over half the population by the time the sounding of the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet has ran it's course. These are unprecedented numbers, billions of people will die. If there are 6 billion people on the planet after the rapture (there are nearly 7 billion now). ¼ of that # is 1.5 billion that will die when the ¼ seal is loosed (how long that will take we don't know, be it a month or a year, who knows). 1/3 more is just shy of another 1.5 billion so that the death toll somewhere toward the middle of the great tribulation will approximately ½ the planet! You guys that's staggering!

But again we call attention to the fact that they have a specific sphere of activity (1/3 of mankind), they are activated upon God's command, & execute His will in His timing. They were prepared for & commissioned upon the hour, day, month & year that God had ordained. It's no wonder that Jesus said, *"For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days."*<sup>1</sup>

It would appear as though these angels represent another set of generals or high ranking soldiers in Satan's ranks because they will bring into battle another 200 million demonic mounted troops, check it out...

### Vs 16-19

This Satanic cavalry of sorts isn't like the one mentioned above.

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 [Mk 13:19-20], Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's not the riders who are dealing out the damage here so much as the "horses" themselves who have heads like lions, they breathe fire & smoke, brimstone/sulfur is part of their arsenal, their tails are like serpents, having heads & doing harm. Which is to say they can attack from both the front & the back.

The previous army was forbidden to kill, this army marches w/death as it's express, unrelenting agenda.

Again people wonder if it's a natural army or a supernatural army. A human army of this size has *never* been seen. China claimed an army this size in 1965 but it's never been seen. **The total size of all armies combined at the height of WWII was 70 million. This army is 200 million! It's difficult to imagine a human army marching toward the west killing 1.5 billion people. I won't say its impossible, but to me it seems improbable. I think it safest to let this be what John seems to be describing & that is simply a demonic army that invades earth on a scale that we cannot comprehend.** One commentator (Newell) made the statement, "Believe & you scarcely need any comment." The people who say that the book of Revelation is hard to understand & impossible to interpret of those who don't believe it for simply what it says. It you & I will just read it & believe it, it's crystal clear. Hell will be unleashed on planet earth in the midst of the Great Tribulation.

Now you would think w/all this supernatural phenomena taking place & God's judgment being poured out that people would be repenting in droves... Yet a simple survey of the Exodus shows us that the unparalleled capability of man to harden his heart against the judgment of God; if you don't believe me just ask Pharaoh...

#### Vs 20-21

Do you wanna snapshot of civilization after the church is raptured? Here it is: idolatry, exponential increase in occult activity, murders, drug abuse, sexual immorality & thievery...Those whom God spares through all of this will only harden in their sin.

If you're wondering why I mentioned drug abuse rather than sorceries it's because it's the Greek word "Pharmakeia" from which we get pharmaceutical or pharmacy, it's speaking of drug use.

In the bible it's referred to as sorcery because it's connected w/witchcraft & occult practices, there's a spiritual element to it that opens the door to demonic influence & potential possession in the unbeliever's life.

I found an article on the internet just Friday about a recent overdose of a young man named Elijah Stai (17 yrs old) from the latest drug that's on the up rise known by it's street name as "smiles". The article read, "Witnesses described the 17-year-old boy as 'shaking, growling, foaming at the mouth.' According to police reports, Elijah Stai was at a McDonald's with his friend when he began to feel ill. Soon after, he 'started to smash his head against the ground' and began acting 'possessed,' according to a witness. Two hours later, he had stopped breathing."

Another report from a user said this, "At first I'd think something was extremely beautiful and then it looked really strange, I looked at my girlfriend's face for a minute and it was pitch black...the black started dripping out of her eye." Another describes the "high" as "a roller coaster ride through hell,".

Yet people refuse to repent & continue to rebel. God's desire is that you choose life & not death. If you're waiting for God to fire warning shots across the bow to let you know you're out of line odds are it's not going to happen. When it's time for judgment to fall God just pretty much sinks the ship... Today is the day of salvation, amen? Don't resist the work of the Lord in your life, open your heart to the Lord, give Him full reign, allow Him to have His way in your heart...today.

#### Prayer Points:

Lord help us that we not resist the work of Your Spirit in our lives today. We don't desire to be reservoirs that keep You from moving, we want to be conduits through whom You can flow. Father we want to be light, & salt in this world that is perishing apart from You. Unify us & use us, stoke the fire in our hearts for Your glory & may Your will be done Your way in our lives.

If you've not come into a personal relationship w/Jesus, if you're walking in a way that's contrary to His heart than today you have the opportunity to turn around, to act in repentance toward God & faith toward our Lord J.C. Jesus already absorbed the full fury of God's wrath on our behalf as He poured out His blood upon the cross, forgiveness awaits, renewal can be yours. Today is the day of salvation, now is the time to respond, give your life to Jesus.