

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

JROC - Woe, Woe.... (Rev. 8:13-Rev. 9:1-21)

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During the seven-year Tribulation there are three series of devastating, intensifying judgments:

Seven seals – the seals are keeping the scroll, the title deed to the land, rolled. When the scroll is unrolled, Jesus will inherit the earth, the Kingdom of God will be established on the earth.

Seven trumpets – trumpets warn in the OT and they speak to the Day of the Lord – the Day of Judgment noted in the OT (Joel 2:1-2a).

Seven bowls – the bowls of judgment will be poured out onto the earth in rapid succession

The Tribulation will demonstrate God's righteous wrath as He judges a wicked, rebellious world and cleanses the earth. The Tribulation will prove to be a time of purging/cleansing for Israel. The Tribulation will unmask Satan!

In our study of Rev. 8:1-12 we described the first four trumpets as cataclysmic/violent natural eruptions impacting a limited part of the earth. These judgments are the supernatural judgments of God. The last trumpet judgments, the fifth, sixth, and seventh, are labeled as “woes”! The Greek word for “woe” is *ouai*. It is primarily an exclamation of grief, a sudden cry due to anguish, affliction, anger, or pain. These three woes are the final judgments from God on the evil inhabitants of the earth...in order to spur them to repentance. Result of the first two woes: Rev. 9:20 - *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.* ²¹ *And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

Rev. 8:13 - *And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”*

Revelation 9:1-12 - *Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.* ² *And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.* ³ *Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.* ⁴ *They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.* ⁵ *And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.* ⁶ *In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.* ⁷ *The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.* ⁸ *They had hair*

like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹ And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. ¹¹ And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. ¹² One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

In Revelation 9, hell comes to men!

Rev. 9:1 - *Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.* We have viewed the activity of stars in Revelation: Rev. 6:12-17; Rev. 8:12-13 – unusual disturbances in the starry heavens; Rev. 6 - the stars of heaven fall and heaven rolls up as a scroll; Rev. 8 - a great “star” falls from heaven into the waters on earth making them bitter; this “star” in Rev. 8 is possibly a meteor/asteroid/comet bursting into flames as falls through earth's atmosphere.

Regarding the identity of the star in Rev. 9:1, there is speculation. Scholars are divided as to whether this “star” is an angel (perhaps the fifth angel that sounds the trumpet), a special messenger from God (*angel* means messenger), a fallen angel, or Satan himself. We need to note that the “fifth angel” in Rev. 9:1 is distinct from “a star fallen from heaven to earth.” In Rev. 8:2 we see that the angels sounding the trumpets are standing before God – in His throne room.

The star fallen from heaven to earth is the one who was given the key to the bottomless pit. “Fallen” is in the perfect tense in the Greek which emphasizes a completed action – in the past.

Luke 10:18 – When the disciples reported their success at exorcising demons to Jesus, He said, *I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.* Jesus' words refer to Lucifer's fall (Isa. 14:12-15 - *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!....*)

No explanation is offered in Rev. 9 concerning the identity of this “star;” however, aside from Jesus' words in Luke 10:18, we read in Rev. 12 that during the Tribulation Satan will be cast to the earth.

NOTE: At Lucifer's fall, we know Satan was on earth – in Eden – in the wilderness tempting Jesus.... But, Satan continued to have access to God (Job 1). Satan accuses believers today. In Rev. 12 Satan will be cast to the earth, no longer having access to heaven, no longer accusing believers before God! (Read Rev. 12:7-12)

In Rev. 9:1, this “star” cannot be a literal star as a key was given to him. “Key” in Scripture speaks to authority (Matt. 16:19; Rev. 1:18). This passage addresses the unlocking, so to speak, of a preliminary prison.

Jude v.6 - *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.* This is a preliminary prison for those fallen angels who “did not keep their proper domain” - who had sexual relations with the daughters of men on earth in Noah's day (see Gen. 6:1ff; Gen. 6:4 – giants were on the earth in those days - *when the sons of*

God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. Their final and permanent abode will be the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:10).

In Rev. 9:1 we read that the key to the bottomless pit, or pit of abyss, will be given to this fallen star. The “bottomless pit” – the “shaft of the abyss” (Gr., abyssos) is a deep opening in the ground to a sealed-in well (*Analytical Lexicon of the Greek NT*, p 402). This is the abode of demons according to [Luke 8:31](#). (The Greek word is found seven times in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3).

Those who believe that the “star” is Satan believe that he will be given the key to the pit of the abyss with power to release those who are confined there. Those who do not believe the “star” is Satan teach that it is unlikely that God would entrust the key of the bottomless pit to Satan or to any fallen angel – but that Jesus will give one of His angels the key since we are told in Rev. 1:18 that Jesus has the keys to death and hades. The text does not state that Jesus gave one of His angels the key...

Rev. 9:1b-4 - To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ² And he opened the bottomless pit and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

This smoke darkens the sun and the air. As we are looking at what comes forth from the bottomless pit, we must conclude that the locusts represent demons swarming out into the earth like locusts.

Six factors that support the view that these beings are demons:

- It appears that their leader is a fallen angel or demon (Rev. 9:11).
- They come from the abyss which is the place where some fallen angels or demons are consigned (Luke 8:31).
- They cannot be literal locusts because they attack people, not vegetation (Rev. 9:4). Literal locusts feast on vegetation and not people.
- These locusts only torture those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (Rev. 9:4; Rev. 7:3).
- Demons apparently have the ability to appear in a variety of material forms, both human and animal. In Revelation 16:13 demons appear as unclean frogs.
- The description of these beings as given in Revelation 9:7-10 goes far beyond anything from this world.
- Literal locusts have no king over them. *Prov. 30:27 - The locusts have no king, yet all of them go out in ranks.* By contrast, the locusts described in Rev. 9:11 have “the angel of the abyss” as their leader. These are demonic beings in material form let forth by their king, “the angel of the abyss.”

“Revelation 9...shows us that a time will come when the invisible warfare (possibly technological warfare – cyber warfare) of today will become insignificant compared to the frontal assault of the enemy’s army during the Tribulation.... Apparently, the abyss is also the place where certain demons have been kept in prison until judgment (Luke 8:30-31; II Peter 2:4). Given the context of the end-time judgments, it appears that the opening of the abyss in Revelation 9 forecasts a short-term release of demons prior to their final condemnation in the lake of fire.” Chuck Swindoll

What will it be like when countless numbers of demons who have been chained in the abyss for thousands of years run rampant throughout the earth in visible form during the Tribulation? ADD to this that Satan and his fallen host will be cast down from heaven to the earth. There will be a demonic crossfire with Satan and the fallen angels cast from the above on to the earth and the demons from the abyss below are dredged up to the earth!

To these demons power was given AS the scorpions of the earth have power. They were not to harm the grass of the earth or any green thing or tree – which things locusts are known to do. Therefore, they are not locusts. These demons are to harm the men who do not have the seal of God (His name) on their foreheads.

Rev. 9:5 - And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. These demons will be given limited power. They will not be able to kill the men without the seal of God. Even the torment they will cause is limited as far as time is concerned: five months. The torment is likened to the torment that scorpions inflict.

Rev. 9:6 - In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them. During the Tribulation we are viewing what separation from God looks like.

Rev. 9:7-12 - The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.⁸ They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth.⁹ And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.¹⁰ They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.¹¹ And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.¹² One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

- *Like horses prepared for battle* – the demons will be mobile; likened to cavalry.
- *Crowns of something like gold* – not the real deal; fake; counterfeit like their leader. Could this represent counterfeit victory over the unsaved world?
- *Faces like the faces of men* – Intelligence? Determination?
- *Hair like women’s hair* – Perhaps long and loose – rather wild? Perhaps strikingly beautiful – speaking of attracting people to them.
- *Teeth...like lions’ teeth* – ferocious, tearing, ripping apart.

- *Breastplates like breastplates of iron* – breastplates protect vital organs and sustain the life of soldiers. The breastplate is nearly impenetrable.
- *The sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle* – a battle will rage and the demons, countless in number, will come upon this earth with great speed and power.

We should note that John is using comparative terms (i.e. like). John is being shown what he has never before seen. We need to consider that we know next to nothing re: the demonic realm. Satan can be transformed into an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14).

Rev. 9:11 - *And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.* Prov. 30:27 – locusts have no king which further proves that these are not literal locusts. These are demons in submission to a king.

Consideration: if Satan is understood as the “fallen star” to which the key is given to open the pit (presumably from the outside) and this angel named *Abaddon* (destruction)/*Apollyon* (destroyer) is from the pit, there appears to be a distinction between the “fallen star” and the “angel.”

Consideration: Satan’s domain – Eph. 6:12 - *spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*. Eph. 2:2 – *prince of the power of the air*. Satan does not appear to be associated with the abyss until he is cast into it (Rev. 20:1-3).

Consideration: This king from the bottomless pit might be an angel as the text states. It appears that it is neither Satan nor the antichrist but a high-ranking fallen angel who has served as king over the imprisoned demons for the duration of their time in the pit. There is hierarchy among the holy angels (Michael – archangel). Might there be an hierarchy among fallen angels?

Are we now more aware of the spiritual corruption – like never before – on the earth that will occur during the Tribulation?

Rev. 9:12 - *One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.* Rev. 9:13-19 - *Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.¹⁶ Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.¹⁷ And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.¹⁹ For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.* The sixth trumpet signals the advance of a great army numbering

200 million that will kill one-third of mankind (Rev. 9:15-16). Many have speculated that this passage describes a Chinese invasion of Israel. Why?

- The army of 200 million in Rev. 9 has been incorrectly viewed as parallel with the kings from the east crossing the dried-up Euphrates in Rev. 16. These judgments are not to be understood as parallel but as successive – unfolding. The following passage speaks to Armageddon.

Rev. 16:12-14 - *Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.*¹³ *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*¹⁴ *For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...*¹⁶ *And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.*

No 200 million army is noted. Armageddon is noted.

I'm suggesting that it better fits the context of these two woes when we understand the fifth trumpet with the locusts as the first wave and the sixth trumpet with the massive army (in Rev. 9) as the second wave of demonic invaders who assault the earth during the Tribulation.

- The fifth trumpet judgment is clearly a demonic invasion of the earth. The fifth and sixth trumpets are to be seen together in that they are the first two of three “woes” (Rev. 8:13).

- Fallen angels lead this armada just as they do in the fifth trumpet judgment. Rev. 9:14 – four angels who have been bound will be released. The bound angels are fallen. Scripture does not speak to God's ministering spirits/angels as being bound. Heb. 1:14 - *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?* The rather fearsome description in Rev. 9:17-19 may better fit supernatural beings better than modern warfare.

- *Heads of the horses like heads of lions* – fierce, terrifying, destructive. Natural horses do not breathe fire, smoke, and brimstone.
- Consider: A demonic army of 200 million – 80% of the US population!
- *Plagues* – recalls the plagues in Egypt. Just as the plagues in Egypt hardened Pharaoh (along with his own heart hardening him), hardcore unbelief and stubborn willful rebellion will be the result of these plagues.

Therefore, it doesn't appear that the army of 200 million in Revelation 9:16 is a human army employing modern or futuristic weapons but a demonic cavalry invading the earth.

Rev. 9:13 - *at the great river Euphrates* – The River Euphrates is in the Mesopotamian Valley which was the cradle of civilization. It was where the garden of Eden was located; it was where the first sin was committed; it was where the first lie was told (Satan to Eve); it was where the first murder was committed (Cain killing Abel); and it was where the first grave was dug. It was in this region where God saw that the wickedness of man was great and, thereby, sent the universal flood. It was where men attempted to build a tower that would reach into the heavens, so that God confounded the

languages. Nimrod built the tower of Babel. It was from this region where ancient Israel's most oppressive enemies came: the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians. It is here that God has kept in confinement four fallen angels who will be loosed upon the earth when the sixth trumpet is sounded. It might be that God chose to bind these angels at the place of Satan's first apparent "victory – serving notice to the world that this "victory" will be overturned.

During the Tribulation, demons will overrun the earth, afflicting men with great pain and ultimately slaying one-third of the people on earth (Rev. 9:15, 18).

In Scripture, when have we seen demonic activity? In the Gospels, during Jesus' earthly public ministry at His first coming.

Matt. 10:5-8 – *These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans."⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.* Jesus was announcing that He had come – and if Israel as a nation would accept Him as Messiah, the Kingdom of heaven/God would be given to them.

What will take place in the earthly Millennial Kingdom that God promised to Israel? Isa. 35:5-6 – healing of the deaf, the lame, and the blind. Read Isaiah 35 which describes the glory of the Millennial/Messianic Kingdom. Rev. 20 tells us that Satan will be bound when Jesus establishes His kingdom!

Rev. 20:1-3 - *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

The sad conclusion of the first two woes: Rev. 9:20-21 - *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

This is a refusal to change their minds regarding Who God is and the worship of Him. YET, demons who are the instruments of man's destruction in the fifth and sixth trumpets are worshipped! Men worship the very things that destroy them.

There are over 600 warnings in Scripture about judgment and evil.

The judgments that we are reading about are just a small glimpse of eternal hell which is a place of fire and smoke (lake of fire). It is a place of pain (Luke 16). Hell is a place of crying. Hell is a place where a person cannot die. Hell is a place of separation, torment, and agony!

May God give us opportunities to share Who He is!