

The Book of Revelation

Lesson 12 – Chapter 9

1. Chapter 9
 - 1.1. The first four trumpets emphasized sin's effect on the natural world.
 - 1.2. Chapter 9 opens with a vision of another series of devastating tragedies that are brought upon sinful man.
 - 1.2.1. This also expresses the justice of God.
 - 1.3. Remember that John is writing to Christians and explaining to them the principles whereby God governs the world and works out his plan.
2. **Rev.9:1-2**
 - 2.1. **Rev. 9:1 - And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss.**
 - 2.1.1. The fifth trumpet introduces the personal effect sin has on man himself.
 - 2.1.2. The star that fell in **Rev. 8:10** was not a person, but this one is personified.
 - 2.1.3. There is no way to identify who this star is. He was given a key. Key designates authority. Since it was given to him, it indicates that he had no independent authority.
 - 2.1.3.1. It is NOT Satan! This judgment is from God upon those who follow Satan!
 - 2.1.3.2. This fallen star is evidently a messenger of judgment since the pronoun "him" is applied and he opens the pit. The concept of the fallen star is likely taken from **Isa. 14:12** where the king of Babylon is described as such. Here the messenger turned loose a hellish plague on sinners who had "not the seal of God on their foreheads."
 - 2.1.4. The abyss is mentioned nine times in the New Testament (**Luke 8:31; Romans 10:7; Revelation 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3**).
 - 2.2. **Rev. 9:2 - And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.**
 - 2.2.1. From the smoke appeared a great darkness.
 - 2.2.2. Sin is the darkest of dark. We have no light when we are in sin. It chokes the spiritual life of those caught up in it.
 - 2.2.2.1. **1 John 1:5-7 - And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin**
3. **Rev. 9:3 - And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.**
 - 3.1. Locust plagues were disastrous problems in those days. People were helpless before their onslaught. They had no pesticides nor airplanes for exterminating them; no rapid communication to facilitate dealing with them.
 - 3.2. They traveled in large hordes eating vegetation. These hordes would sometimes be a hundred feet wide and four miles long. They were a symbol of destruction in the Old Testament. The scorpion has a terrible sting, but it is usually not fatal, but very painful. They had power as a scorpion, but did not look like them.

- 3.3. These were uncommon locusts as the following verses indicate.
- 3.4. These locusts have power like a scorpion's stinger. The scorpion has a terrible sting; very painful, but usually not fatal. They torment sinners so that they wish to die but can't find release.
- 3.5. The five months means for a short period of time. That particular figure is probably chosen because it is the life span of the locusts.
4. **Rev. 9:4 - And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads.**
- 4.1. Locust were not going to perform in the way which is natural to them but would be carrying out God's plan.
- 4.1.1. Literal locusts devour vegetation, but not flesh. These ignore the plants and attack men.
- 4.1.2. They specifically hurt "only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads." The seal of God is the Holy Spirit of promise with which Christians are sealed at their conversion, the same Spirit is also the earnest of their inheritance with God (**2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13-14**). The Spirit is received at the time of baptism (**Acts 2:38**).
- 4.1.3. The locusts only harm sinners.
- 4.2. Sin has consequences
- 4.2.1. God's vengeance will be upon those who refuse Him.
- 4.2.2. **Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God**
- 4.2.3. **Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
- 4.2.4. **James 1:13-15 - Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.**
- 4.3. Those who have the seal of God are protected.
- 4.3.1. The idea is that God knows his own (**2 Timothy 2:19**), and he will protect them from the evils that come.
- 4.3.2. This does not mean that Christians will be spared from suffering and trials, or even death, but that God will **not** let them be destroyed spiritually, if they are faithful to him. He will give them the strength to overcome.
- 4.3.3. They have the assurance that they are God's, and he will be with them every step of the way.
5. **Rev. 9:5 - And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man.**
- 5.1. It was limited to five months, which is the life of a locust. The five months represents a limited period of time during which men were tormented and may repent and turn from their wickedness.
- 5.2. The locust did not kill, but the torment was very painful like a scorpion.
- 5.3. The plague was intended to show that wickedness couldn't continue without divine retribution. It must be remembered that these are symbols that

represented pain brought upon the wicked. It may be the consequences of sin. It refers to mental and spiritual torment.

6. **Rev. 9:6 - And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them.**

6.1. The desire is that men will understand their own wickedness and weakness, and turn to God.

6.2. Dependence on God and the knowledge of the eternal salvation that is promised to His people are the only things which help us endure sufferings of life.

6.3. Those who deny or know not God will wish for death rather than suffer. They do not understand the greater "Woe" that awaits them.

7. **Rev. 9:7-12**

7.1. **Rev. 9:7 - And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces.**

7.1.1. The description of the locusts is frightening. They looked like horses (Joel 2:4).

7.1.2. They had on their heads as it were crowns like unto gold. He did not say they had crowns on their heads; it just looked as they were. These were crowns of victory to show that they would be victorious in carrying out their mission. This is the only place where the Greek **stephanos** (crown of victory) is used other than for Christ and Christians.

7.1.3. Their faces were like men's faces. They were intelligent.

7.1.4. Differing opinions as to what event this references but Rome suffered from repeated invasions of barbarian hordes and finally fell before them. In A.D. 400-410 Alaric led the Visigoths into Italy and sacked Rome. In 455 Gaiseric and his vandals did the same. Atilla the Hun ravaged Italy in 451. In 476 Odoacer, a barbarian, was crowned king of Italy.

7.2. **Rev. 9:8 - And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as [teeth] of lions.**

7.3. **Rev. 9:9 - And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war.**

7.4. **Rev. 9:10 - And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months.**

7.4.1. His description of the warriors is breathtaking and blood-chilling: turbans like crowns, bearded faces and long flowing hafts. Their clenched teeth reminded him of a lion's mouth. They had breastplates of iron, thus were invincible. He heard the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war.

7.5. **Rev. 9:11 - They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek [tongue] he hath the name Apollyon.**

7.5.1. Their king is the angel of the abyss whose name is destruction (Destroyer). This is what Abaddon and Apollyon mean in the Hebrew and Greek. This is not the fallen star. This is Satan.

7.5.2. The message is simple; God will destroy those who have decided to follow Satan.

7.5.3. God is the ruler over all.

7.6. Rev. 9:12 - The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woos hereafter.

7.6.1. The wrath of God against those who oppose Him will be bring the greatest amount of fear that mankind can possible imagine.

7.6.1.1. The imagery of scary looking creatures who war on the opponents of God, but have the promise of victory given to them, should be enough to convince sinful man that they cannot win apart from God

7.6.1.1.1. Crowns like unto gold; this is the only place where the Greek **stephanos** (crown of victory) is used other than for Christ and Christians.

7.6.1.2. Those who survive the first Woe are reminded the worst is yet to come and they need to repent.

8. Rev. 9:13-21

8.1. Rev. 9:13 - And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God,

8.1.1. The sixth angel is ready to sound, which will bring the second woe.

8.1.1.1. John heard a voice. It came from the horns of the golden altar. This is the altar from which the martyrs cried to God in chapter 6:10.

8.1.1.2. It is the altar on which prayer was offered as recorded in chapter 8:3-5. John does not say whose voice it is. The voice is from the altar itself, which is before God.

8.1.2. The first woe is past, the next woe is worse. In the last woe, they worked upon the hearts of men and had awful pain, but here many were killed.

8.1.3. As before, a third indicates a large number, but not a majority. It is a warning for the rest to repent.

8.1.4. Remember that John is writing to Christians and explaining to them the principles whereby God governs the world and works out his plan.

8.2. Rev. 9:14 - one saying to the sixth angel that had one trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates.

8.2.1. The sixth trumpet signaled the four angels at the river Euphrates to turn loose their wrath on the sinful nation.

8.2.1.1. Some commentators mention that the fact that these four angels were bound may indicate that they were evil angels. Good angels work as directed by God. Evil angels work against God, but only as he allows them to work.

8.2.1.2. They should not be confused with the four angels of chapter 7:1. This is the only time they are mentioned.

8.2.2. The Euphrates River was the eastern boundary of Rome's dominion.

8.2.3. The chief enemies of Israel came from across the Euphrates.

8.2.4. God's vengeance upon those who oppose Him can come from anywhere and from anyone, friend or foe, according to God's providential activity.

8.2.5. Sin has no safe haven.

8.3. Rev. 9:15 - And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men.

8.3.1. The sixth trumpet signaled the four angels at the river Euphrates to turn loose their wrath on the sinful nation. In **Rev. 7:1** we see four similar "angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds" of judgment

until all of God's servants are properly sealed for preservation and protection. Here these angels of God's providence will kill the third part of sinners, e.g., a great but incomplete number. Providence had prepared this judgment specifically for that point in history.

8.3.2. This signifies that this is NOT God's final judgment, but a partial one which, in turn, allows sinful man an opportunity to repent.

8.3.3. They were loosed and they had been prepared for the exact time. The idea is that this is according to God's timetable. Remember that the will of God will be done on earth even though many individuals do not do it. They unleashed a great army that goes forth to kill a third of the people of the earth. This was to be a warning for them to repent. It was directed toward the wicked of the earth. It refers not to one specific battle or invasion, but to wars through out the Christian Age.

8.4. Rev. 9:16 - And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them.

8.4.1. It is typical of apocalyptic writing to use numbers symbolically. It was a cavalry of two hundred million (200,000,000) used to describe the vastness of the army. Such numbers would make a troop of cavalry one mile wide and eighty-five miles long. Their numbers were overwhelming.

8.5. Rev. 9:17 - And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates [as] of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone.

8.5.1. He paints a chilling picture of the fierce warriors. They were intended to terrify.

8.5.2. Fire and brimstone were used in the Bible to denote punishment of the wicked.

8.5.3. Their breastplates reminded him of fire: red, blue and yellow. Perhaps he is seeing the destruction of burning cities left behind them.

8.5.4. Perhaps referencing invading armies that slaughtered and left a burned trail across the land.

8.6. Rev. 9:18 - By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths.

8.6.1. The fire, smoke and brimstone represent three plagues that came upon mankind, which killed the third part of them.

8.6.1.1. The first woe was painful.

8.6.1.2. The second woe is deadly; it kills.

8.6.1.3. These plagues came out of the horses' mouths.

8.6.2. Fire and brimstone remind us of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These plagues come from God upon the wicked.

8.7. Rev. 9:19 - For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt.

8.7.1. God's strength and power is so overwhelming that mortal man cannot imagine it.

8.7.2. John needed a vision to be able to describe the overwhelming force which God can bring to bear upon those who are opposed to Him.

- 8.7.3. Again, the use of 1/3 reiterates God's desire for mankind to recognize their sinful state and repent.
- 9.8. **Rev. 9:20 - And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk:**
- 9.8.1. The rest of mankind refers to wicked mankind, which was not killed by these plagues. They did not repent of their evil deeds.
- 9.8.1.1. This shows the purpose of these plagues was to try to bring men to repentance. Worshipping idols is equated with worshipping demons, a practice recorded often in the Bible (**Deuteronomy 4:28; 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:20**).
- 9.8.2. Worship of idols is not of God and is expressly forbidden by God and is the work of the devil. These idols were made from material substance and fashioned by man. Thus, men worship their creation of god rather than worshipping the one true and living God who created the gold, silver, brass and stone. With the worship of idols goes every conceivable sin as indicated by Romans, chapter 1. When men worship idols, they grow worse and worse.
- 9.8.3. When they worship the one true and living God and live for him, they become better and better. Many people who turn away from the one true and living God cannot be reached. They are without excuse as Paul states in **Romans 1:20**.
- 9.9. **Rev. 9:21 - and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.**
- 9.9.1. The wicked did not repent of their sins.
- 9.9.2. A few of them are listed here. When men turn away from God, they become more corrupt and immoral. They murder. God prohibits the taking of life. Sorceries refer to witchcraft and the use of magic portions. Fornication refers to all sexual immorality and perversion. Stealing is condemned all through the Bible. These are characteristics of those working against God and living without him.
- 9.9.3. Many people who turn away from the one true and living God cannot be reached. They are without excuse as Paul states in Romans 1:20.
- 9.9.4. Trumpets warn. The first four trumpets showed God using the natural elements seeking to get men to repent. The fifth trumpet showed the wickedness of sin gnawing upon their minds and consciences, as they are afflicted with the consequences of their sins. And the sixth trumpet showed the awfulness of "war" as it is afflicted upon the wicked.
- 9.9.5. One should not pick out one war or one battle to which these symbols refer. They refer to events that happen again and again throughout history as God seeks to get men to turn from their sin and turn to him.