

## **ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE: Revelation 9**

Remember, we are looking at Revelation from the standpoint of how the first readers might have understood it. Their points of reference for interpreting Revelation are identical to ours. Just like God, His word never changes. The first readers recalled and searched Jesus' words, the Apostle's words, and the Old and New Testaments (scripture) to accurately interpret Revelation (scripture). That is the only way to receive all of God's intended Spiritual comfort and profit. Just like them, we recall and search scripture to interpret Revelation (scripture). If the first readers used any source other than scripture to interpret Revelation, they were just as lost to its Spiritual comforts and profits as our elites are today and the last two millenniums.

Revelation, chapter 9, for a lack of a better term, and I say this respectfully, all hell breaks loose because the bottomless pit is opened flooding the earth with demons.

Rev 9:1-3 and 7, "And the fifth angel sounded, and I (John) saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 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. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power . . . (verse 7) And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle . . ." John describes these locusts in the verses that follow.

Rev 9:11, "They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew Abaddon, and in the Greek his name is Apollyon." Both words mean destroyer.

Rev 9:13-14, "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.'" There is a great war.

Rev 9:17, do not lose sight of the fact John describes what he sees in this vision. We must not lose sight of that. John describes his vision, "And this is how I saw in a vision the horses and those who sat on them . . ."

Rev 9:20-21, John ends the chapter saying, "**And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immoralities, nor of their thefts.**"

A star in Scripture usually refers to a ruler. In this vision, he is pictured as a spiritual ruler who has power to loose the locusts (demons) upon the earth. His name is destroyer. Satan, of course, is the one who was given the key to the bottomless pit, pictured as a star which had fallen from heaven. Whatever happens hereafter comes from the power of Satan, the evil one. Satan opens the bottomless pit, other versions call it the abyss, and the smoke goes up from the pit like a great furnace.

The bottomless pit, sometimes called the abyss, is used seven times in the book of Revelation. The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, including the Apocrypha, translated by 70 scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, before Christ's birth, translates the word "deep" in Genesis 1:2 as the abyss or the bottomless pit, "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep . . ." It is said to be the deepest part of the sea.

Job 28:14 and Psalm 33:7, the "deep" refers to the underground rivers and the vault of water that run underground.

In Gen 7:11, "The fountains of the great deep burst open." The "deep" is translated the abyss, or the bottomless pit, as it also is in Gen 8:2 and Job 38:16.

In Psalm 77:16, "The deeps trembled," referring to the abyss or bottomless pit when the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord swept the sea *back* by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. And the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left (Ex 14:21-22).

Ezekiel 26:19-20, describes the judgment God brings against Tyre, "For thus says the Lord God, 'When I shall make you a desolate city, like the cities which are not inhabited, when I shall bring up the deep over you, and great waters will cover you.' Then I shall bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I shall make you dwell in the lower parts of the earth, like the ancient waste places, with those who go down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited, but I shall set glory **in the land of the living.**" God is going to bring up the bottomless pit and spread it over Tyre. These are the descriptive, but figurative terms, God used to describe Tyre's destruction.

In the New Testament, Luke 8:30-31, the demon ("unclean spirit") told Jesus his name was "Legion, for many demons had entered him. And they (the demons) were entreating Him (Jesus) not to command them to depart into the abyss." Jesus obliged them and sent them into the swine.

Later, in Rev 11:7, "the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them." The abyss, or the bottomless pit refers to the farthest extreme from heaven. It is as far away as you can get from God. God is going to go to the extreme in order to bring judgment as these angels sound.

This vision said something specific to the original readers. If we can understand what it says to them, we might be able to understand what it says to us. Whenever they read Revelation 9 for the first time, their minds might have gone back to when Jesus prophesied the list of terrible events that were mere "birth pangs" before the end comes when God judgment wipes out Jerusalem, the temple, and the Old Testament covenant system not many years from then.

Matt 24:2, Jesus said, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here shall be left upon another (the temple), which will not be torn down . . . (verses 21-22), a great tribulation, such as not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And

unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”

The first readers may have recalled the destruction of Tyre when God reached down to the abyss and dredged up something horrible that covered their land; but knowing the abyss would dredge up for Jerusalem something far worse than Tyre experienced. These readers knew God was going to give Satan the power to turn loose, in all their fury, the demons under Satan’s control.

Matt 12:41-42, describes the depth of the demons’ fury to be experienced in Revelation chapter 9. Jesus speaks to the religious leaders of His day who are rejecting Him, "The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgement (this generation is the one in which He is living and is the same generation He identifies in Matthew 24), and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."

Now, Jesus makes His main point in the next two verses, but we missed it for decades because we chose to focus on His lesser point, vs. 43-44, “Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came;’ and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

For decades, we stopped reading right there. Our lesser teaching point was: hesitate when casting out demons, be careful and avoid exorcisms if you are not experienced, without ever reading or teaching His main point, which was, “This is the way it will also be with this evil generation.” In context, Jesus is saying Jerusalem has been swept clean by My ministry and teachings, the demon departed, I occupy your house and as long as I occupy your house the demon cannot return; but, if you reject me and I leave, your house will be unoccupied, swept, and put in order. The demon, having gone out, will come back bringing seven others more evil than the first, and the latter state is going to be worse than it was in the beginning.

Fast forward to Rev 9, the nation of Israel will not be just demon possessed, demons will overrun the nation of Israel. The entire demonic force from the abyss will be pulled up, given power, and released in Israel. Later, Rev 18:2, “And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.’”

We will leave John’s vision of these demons for a moment and come back to it later.

Rev 9:13, "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God." The golden altar was first mentioned in Rev 8:3-7 when the prayers of the saints had gone up, were laying on the golden altar, much incense (maybe Christ’s intercession) was given to the angel that he might add it to the prayers of the saints, the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints went up before God out of the angel’s hand, fire from

golden altar was used to fill the golden censer and the fire was thrown to earth. Peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake followed. In response to the prayers of the saints, God began to judge.

Rev 9:13, the sixth trumpet sounded releasing the four angels who were bound at the great river Euphrates. In Scripture, the Euphrates River served as a natural barrier protecting Israel's northern boundary. Gen 15:18, "On that day the Lord made covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt (Nile to the south) as far as the great river, the river Euphrates (to the north).'" Interesting, Israel's enemies, Assyria, Syria, Babylon, Medes, and Persians, resided north of the Euphrates invaded after crossing the Euphrates River.

Isaiah 14:31, "Wail, O gate; cry, O city; melt away, O Philistia, all of you; for smoke comes from the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks." Destruction comes from the north.

Ezekiel 1:4, "And I looked, behold, and storm was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like a glowing metal in the midst of fire."

The sixth angel sounded releasing the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates. The Euphrates' protective barrier is useless. Enemies will overrun Israel from the north. John describes a terrible war seeing 200 million horses and the riders, with fire, brimstone, and hyacinth, horse heads as lions, smoke, brimstone, and fire came out of their mouth. Their tails are like the serpents. Three plagues then kill a third of mankind. Survivors do not repent.

That is the message the original readers saw when they first read the ninth chapter of Revelation. What kind of message do we get from this passage?

We see the source of demonic activity. Their king is called destruction. He is a fallen star. Demonic activity involves far more than the deranged people Jesus met living in tombs involved in strange activity.

Ephesians 2:1-2, "And you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." That is demonic activity. We were all dead in trespasses and sins, given over to sin, ruled by demons, and ruled by Satan. the prince of demons.

Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." Behind all flesh and blood we engage outside of Christ, are rulers, powers, world sources of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.

Matthew 12:24, "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons.'" Jesus identifies Beelzebul, vs. 25, "And knowing their thoughts, He said to them, 'Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against

himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?" Jesus recognized Satan as the prince of demons, going under the name of Beelzebub.

John 8:44, Jesus describes Satan, “. . . He (Satan) was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.” Satan’s purpose and plan are to kill God's people.

John 10:10, "The thief (Satan) comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they might have life, and might have *it* abundantly." Satan steals what belongs to God and what belongs to us, especially our spiritual inheritance, spiritual life, and the life God has for us to live. He can kill us by the legalism of the Pharisees, as well as the sword. His purpose is to destroy. Satan changes himself, appears in any form, takes the form of an angel of light, and stands in the clear. Why act deranged when a 3-piece suit works much faster.

I John 4:1, "BELOVED, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." He equates the false prophet with the false spirit. We hear demonic activity on the radio, television, the pulpits and Sunday school classrooms of our churches; places we least expect.

I John 4:2, “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus (as a man in the flesh) is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world.” **Demonic activity is so subtle we must always be aware. It is from the abyss.**

**Demonic power is real. Joel 1 and 2 talks a great deal on this.**

Joel 1:4 and 6, "What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; and what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten . . . (verse 6), For a nation has invaded my land, mighty and without number; its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and it has the fangs of a lioness." **When he talks about locusts, he is talking about a nation that has invaded the land.**

Joel 2:4, "Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like warhorses, so they run. With the noise as of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming stubble." **He talks about how mighty this army of locusts are that will be coming against Israel.**

**Joel 2:11, "and the Lord utters His voice before His army (the invaders are heathens, but Joel speaks of them as the Lord's army); surely His camp is very great, for strong is He who carries out His words. The day of the Lord is indeed a great and very awesome, and who can endure it?" Joel describes the destruction coming upon Israel because they have forgotten God. Joel uses the picture of locusts, bearing out what we have said about demonic activity.**

**The most familiar passage on demonic activity is I Tim 4:1-2, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of hypocrisy of liars seared their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid to marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.” Demons teach a great deal, particularly when they think a person will believe it just because the demon connects it to the bible, albeit a lie. Paul says be careful. James 3:1, “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgement.” Why, because teachers in churches are the source of much demonic activity.**

But now let's notice something else. What about the control of this demonic power? Rev 9:1, when the star hath fallen, “the key of the bottomless pit was given to him . . . verse 3, Out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth. And power was given to them . . . verse 4, And they were told that they should not hurt the grass or any green tree, or any green thing, only men who didn't have the seal of God on their foreheads (they were told where to go, what to do, and who to hurt) . . . verse 5, They were not permitted to kill anyone.”

They were restricted. They could go only as far as God would let them go. They are controlled by the power of God. God was in control. He is always in control. They can only go as far as God wants them to go and as far as He will let them go. There is no independent demonic activity occurring without God allowing it anywhere in this world. Satan could only touch Job to the extent that God let Satan touch Job. God set bounds around Job, "You cannot have his life."