

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 9

REVELATION 9:1-6 - FIRST WOE - 5TH TRUMPET

WHEN THE FIFTH ANGEL SOUNDS JOHN SEES A "STAR WHICH HAD FALLEN TO THE EARTH" GIVEN A KEY TO THE "BOTTOMLESS PIT". WHEN THIS BOTTOMLESS PIT IS OPENED, SMOKE BILLOWS UP AND THE SUN AND AIR ARE DARKENED. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS SMOKE COMES UP, LOCUSTS APPEAR TO CAUSE HAVOC ON THE EARTH. WE WILL LOOK AT THE LOCUST IN A MOMENT. BUT FIRST LET'S CONSIDER A FEW DETAILS:

1 - THE "STAR FROM HEAVEN WHICH HAD FALLEN" IS NOT AN OBJECT, IT'S A PERSON. NOTICE THE END OF VERSE 1 AND START OF VERSE 2 WHICH SAY: "THE KEY OF BOTTOMLESS PIT GIVEN TO *HIM*... *HE OPENED THE BOTTOMLESS PIT*." (9:1B-2A)

2 - THE PHRASE "BOTTOMLESS PIT" SHOWS UP 7X IN REVELATION. IT IS ALSO TRANSLATED "ABYSS" AND IT DESCRIBES A DEEP AND SEEMINGLY BOTTOMLESS PIT. IN EACH OF THE INSTANCES THIS WORD IS USED IT DESCRIBES THE PLACE WHERE THE DEVIL OR HIS REPRESENTATIVES COME FROM OR ARE THROWN INTO. IT'S WHERE "THE BEAST" COMES FROM (REVELATION 11:7, 17:8). IT'S WHERE THE DEVIL IS CAST FOR 1000 YEARS (REVELATION 20:1, 3).

OUR "STAR" OF THIS SCENE IS A "FALLEN STAR" AND THOUGH HE LEADS THE LOCUST HORDE, WE SHOULD NOTICE THAT THE KEY TO THIS ABYSS IS "GIVEN TO HIM" (9:1) AND THAT THE LOCUST, AS POWERFUL AS THEY ARE ARE "GIVEN POWER" (9:3) AND "TOLD" (9:4) AND "NOT PERMITTED TO KILL ANYONE" (9:5).

THERE ISN'T MUCH IN SCRIPTURE ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE DEVIL/SATAN BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE DEVIL IS A "FALLEN CREATURE" - ONE THAT REBELLED AGAINST THE CREATOR AND WAS CURSED AS A RESULT (CP. GENESIS 3). JESUS SAYS TWO THINGS ABOUT THIS:

LUKE 10:18 - AND HE SAID TO THEM, "I WAS WATCHING SATAN FALL FROM HEAVEN LIKE LIGHTNING.

JOHN 12:31 - "NOW JUDGMENT IS UPON THIS WORLD; NOW THE RULER OF THIS WORLD WILL BE CAST OUT.

LATER IN REVELATION, JOHN WILL WRITE:

REVELATION 12:9 - AND THE GREAT DRAGON WAS THROWN DOWN (*FROM HEAVEN*), THE SERPENT OF OLD WHO IS CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN, WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD; HE WAS THROWN DOWN TO THE EARTH, AND HIS ANGELS WERE THROWN DOWN WITH HIM

SO, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS "FALLEN STAR" IS THE DEVIL AND HE WILL BE USED TO BRING TORMENT TO THE EARTH DURING THIS PERIOD OF "WOE". IF THAT IS THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION, WE WILL SEE HIS SLIMY FINGERPRINTS ALL OVER THIS CHAPTER.

DURING THIS FIRST "WOE" WHICH BEGINS AN ENHANCED FORM OF JUDGMENT UPON THE EARTH, LOCUSTS APPEAR, BUT NOT LOCUSTS WHICH WILL EAT PLANTS AND VEGETATION AS USUAL - THESE LOCUSTS ARE GIVEN POWER TO HURT AND TORMENT HUMANS WHO HAD NOT BEEN MARKED WITH

THE "SEAL OF GOD ON THEIR FOREHEADS (V. 4)" (WHICH WAS GIVEN IN REVELATION 7.) THEY WILL INFLICT PAIN ON THEIR VICTIMS - BUT THEIR VICTIMS WILL NOT DIE AS A RESULT OF THE LOCUSTS. IN ONE OF THE MOST FRIGHTENING VERSES IN SCRIPTURE WE READ:

"AND IN THOSE DAYS MEN WILL SEEK DEATH AND WILL NOT FIND IT; THEY WILL LONG TO DIE, AND DEATH FLEES FROM THEM." (REVELATION 9:6)

THE SCORPION STING-LIKE PAIN FROM THE LOCUSTS WILL LAST FOR 5 MONTHS. THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD BRING RELIEF FROM THIS TORTURE LIKE PAIN WOULD BE DEATH, AND YET DEATH WILL "FLEE" MEANING THESE PEOPLE WILL NOT DIE, EVEN THOUGH THEY LONG TO.

THE FIRST "WOE" PLAGUE IS A FLASHBACK TO THE (8TH) PLAGUE OF LOCUST IN EGYPT:

EXODUS 10:12-15 - THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, "STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT FOR THE LOCUSTS, THAT THEY MAY COME UP ON THE LAND OF EGYPT AND EAT EVERY PLANT OF THE LAND, EVEN ALL THAT THE HAIL HAS LEFT." 13 SO MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS STAFF OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND THE LORD DIRECTED AN EAST WIND ON THE LAND ALL THAT DAY AND ALL THAT NIGHT; AND WHEN IT WAS MORNING, THE EAST WIND BROUGHT THE LOCUSTS. 14 THE LOCUSTS CAME UP OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT AND SETTLED IN ALL THE TERRITORY OF EGYPT; THEY WERE VERY NUMEROUS. THERE HAD NEVER BEEN SO MANY LOCUSTS, NOR WOULD THERE BE SO MANY AGAIN. 15 FOR THEY COVERED THE SURFACE OF THE WHOLE LAND, SO THAT THE LAND WAS DARKENED; AND THEY ATE EVERY PLANT OF THE LAND AND ALL THE FRUIT OF THE TREES THAT THE HAIL HAD LEFT. THUS NOTHING GREEN WAS LEFT ON TREE OR PLANT OF THE FIELD THROUGH ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT.

THE LOCUST OF EGYPT COMPLETELY DESTROYED THE CROPS AND GREENERY OF EGYPT. THE LOCUSTS WERE SO PREVALENT THAT THE LAND WAS DARKENED BY THEIR SWARMS!

REVELATION 6:7-11, 12 - DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCUST

JOHN TRIES TO DESCRIBE WHAT THESE LOCUST SWARMS LOOK LIKE. HIS DESCRIBES THEM IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- LIKE HORSES PREPARED FOR BATTLE (9:7)
- THEY APPEAR TO HAVE FACES LIKE MEN, WITH HAIR LIKE WOMEN, TEETH LIKE LIONS AND THEY WEAR CROWNS LIKE GOLD ON THEIR HEADS (9:7-8)
- BREASTPLATES LIKE IRON. AS THEIR WINGS FLUTTER IS SOUNDS LIKE CHARIOTS OF MANY HORSES RUNNING TO BATTLE (9:9)
- TAILS LIKE SCORPIONS WHICH STINK AND THE POISON IN THEIR STING HURTS A PERSON FOR FIVE MONTHS (9:10)

THE KING OF THESE TERRIFYING LOCUSTS IS THE SAME "ANGEL" WHO HAS THE KEY TO THE ABYSS (9:1-2, 11). HIS NAME IS "DESTROYER" AND IT IS KNOWN IN BOTH HEBREW & GREEK (HEBREW: ABADDON, GREEK: APOLLYON). IF THIS LOCUST KING IS THE DEVIL, "DESTROYER" IS INDEED A GOOD NAME TO DESCRIBE THIS PEST.

REVELATION 6:13-19 - THE SECOND WOE - 6TH TRUMPET

THE SOUNDING OF THIS 6TH TRUMPET CALLS FOR THE RELEASING OF 4 ANGELS WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS BEING "BOUND AT THE GREAT RIVER EUPHRATES". THESE ANGELS ARE TASKED WITH KILLING "A THIRD OF MANKIND".

THE ORDER FOR THE RELEASE OF THESE DESTROYING ANGELS COMES FROM THE AREA OF THE GOLDEN ALTAR WHICH IS BEFORE GOD (V. 13), IN OTHER WORDS, THIS COMMAND IS EMANATING FROM GOD AS OPPOSED TO SOME ACCIDENTAL RELEASE OF THIS DESTRUCTION.

IT IS LIKELY THAT THESE FOUR ANGELS ARE THE FOUR ANGELS WE READ ABOUT PREVIOUSLY IN REVELATION 7.

REVELATION 7:1-3 - AFTER THIS I SAW FOUR ANGELS STANDING AT THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH, HOLDING BACK THE FOUR WINDS OF THE EARTH, SO THAT NO WIND WOULD BLOW ON THE EARTH OR ON THE SEA OR ON ANY TREE. 2 AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL ASCENDING FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN, HAVING THE SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD; AND HE CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE TO THE FOUR ANGELS TO WHOM IT WAS GRANTED TO HARM THE EARTH AND THE SEA, 3 SAYING, "DO NOT HARM THE EARTH OR THE SEA OR THE TREES UNTIL WE HAVE SEALED THE BOND-SERVANTS OF OUR GOD ON THEIR FOREHEADS."

WHEN WE MET THESE 4 ANGELS IN CHAPTER 7 WE READ THAT THEY WERE READY TO BRING JUDGMENT UPON THE EARTH BUT WERE TOLD TO WAIT UNTIL THE BOND-SERVANTS OF GOD HAD BEEN SEALED, WHICH IS DESCRIBED IN THE REST OF THAT CHAPTER. CHAPTER 8 THEN BEGINS TO TELL OF THE JUDGMENT UPON THE EARTH THAT BEGINS WITH EACH TRUMPET SOUNDING. THE INITIAL JUDGMENTS PRIMARILY AFFECT THE NATURAL ELEMENTS (TREES AND LAND, OCEANS AND WATER, ETC). BUT THESE "WOES" ARE DIRECTLY TARGETING HUMANITY, AND THESE 4 ANGELS THAT HAD BEEN WAITING FOR THEIR "HOUR AND DAY AND MONTH AND YEAR...(9:15)"

JOINING THESE 4 ANGELS IS A MASSIVE ARMY. HERE ARE SOME OF THE DETAILS:

- ARMY OF HORSEMEN, 200,000,000 IN NUMBER!
- RIDERS WITH ARMOR COLORED "FIERY RED AND DARK BLUE AND YELLOW" (REVELATION 9:17, NLT).
- HEADS OF THE HORSES ARE LIKE LIONS, TAILS LIKE SERPENTS (WITH HEADS ON THE TAILS)
- FIRE, SMOKE, BRIMSTONE COMING OUT OF THEIR MOUTH

THE POWER OF THIS ARMY IS PRIMARILY FROM ITS MOUTH - WHICH IS MENTIONED REPEATEDLY IN VERSES 17, 18 & 19. THE "FIRE, SMOKE AND BRIMSTONE" COMING OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS ARE REFERRED TO AS 3 PLAGUES WHICH CAUSE THE DEATH OF $\frac{1}{3}$ OF MANKIND. SECONDLY THE POWER COMES FROM THEIR TAILS - THEIR TAILS HAVE HEADS AND ARE LIKE SERPENTS.

THIS IMAGERY SUPPORTS THE VIEW THAT THE DEVIL IS A PART OF THIS CHAOS. THE USE OF "MOUTH" IN PROPHETIC LITERATURE IS CONSISTENTLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WORDS THAT ARE SPOKEN. THE WORDS SPOKEN BY THESE ANGELIC/DEMONIC FORCES ARE VERY DESTRUCTIVE AND DEADLY - LIKE FIRE, SMOKE AND BRIMSTONE. AND THE SECOND SOURCE OF POWER IS FROM THEIR TAILS WHICH ARE LIKE "SERPENTS" WHICH IS A PREDOMINANT DESCRIPTOR OF THE DEVIL FROM THE BEGINNING.

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN AND HOW DOES THIS ALL WORK? THERE'S MORE TO DISCOVER HERE I AM SURE. BUT THE SIMPLE TAKE AWAY IS THAT THE FORCES OF EVIL ARE WREAKING HAVOC ON HUMANITY - THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONIC ARMY IS TERRORIZING AND TORMENTING MEN AND WOMEN RESULTING IN THEIR DEATH

REVELATION 9:20-21 - HOW WILL THE WORLD RESPOND?

CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE? AS GOD'S JUDGMENT COMES UPON THE EARTH INCLUDING THE DEATH OF $\frac{1}{3}$ OF HUMANITY, THOSE WHO REMAIN, WATCHING THIS UNFOLD ARE UNCHANGED IN THEIR HEARTS. THEY DECIDE TO CONTINUE TO LIVE FOR THEMSELVES AND WORSHIP DEMONS AND IDOLS (V. 20).

AS A RESULT OF THE DEVASTATING LOCUST PLAGUE IN EGYPT, PHARAOH HAD A REMARKABLE REACTION:

EXODUS 10:16-19 - THEN PHARAOH HURRIEDLY CALLED FOR MOSES AND AARON, AND HE SAID, "I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD YOUR GOD AND AGAINST YOU. 17 "NOW THEREFORE, PLEASE FORGIVE MY SIN ONLY THIS ONCE, AND MAKE SUPPLICATION TO THE LORD YOUR GOD, THAT HE WOULD ONLY REMOVE THIS DEATH FROM ME." 18 HE WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH AND MADE SUPPLICATION TO THE LORD. 19 SO THE LORD SHIFTED THE WIND TO A VERY STRONG WEST WIND WHICH TOOK UP THE LOCUSTS AND DROVE THEM INTO THE RED SEA; NOT ONE LOCUST WAS LEFT IN ALL THE TERRITORY OF EGYPT.

PHARAOH CONFESSES THAT HE HAS SINNED "AGAINST YAHWEH AND AGAINST YOU... (EXODUS 10:16)" AND THOUGH THIS MINDSET WOULD BE SHORT LIVED, IT WAS THE RIGHT REACTION TO SUCH DEVASTATION.

YET, IN THE FUTURE AS JUDGMENT AND TORMENT BREAKS OUT UPON THE EARTH, HUMANS DO NOT REALIZE THEIR SIN OR THEIR FRAILTY OR THEIR INABILITY TO BEAT DEATH AND REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR CREATOR AS GOD.

REMEMBER, WHEN THE SEALS ARE BROKEN AND IT BECAME CLEAR THAT JUDGMENT WAS COMING, THE HUMANS ON THE EARTH SAID:

REVELATION 6:15-17 (NLT) - THEN EVERYONE-- THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, THE RULERS, THE GENERALS, THE WEALTHY, THE POWERFUL, AND EVERY SLAVE AND FREE PERSON-- ALL HID THEMSELVES IN THE CAVES AND AMONG THE ROCKS OF THE MOUNTAINS. 16 AND THEY CRIED TO THE MOUNTAINS AND THE ROCKS, "FALL ON US AND HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF THE ONE WHO SITS ON THE THRONE AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB. 17 FOR THE GREAT DAY OF THEIR WRATH HAS COME, AND WHO IS ABLE TO SURVIVE?"

WE ARE READING IN REVELATION A PROPHETIC VISION OF THIS DAY OF JUDGMENT UPON THE EARTH. CHRIST HAS NOT RETURNED YET, BUT FINAL CATAclysmic THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN ON THE EARTH WHICH ARE SIGNS OF HIS NEARNESS AND THE SHORTNESS OF TIME FOR MEN TO TURN AWAY FROM THEIR SIN AND REPENT.

EVEN IN THIS TERRIFYING CHAPTER WE SEE MERCY - IN THE MIDST OF JUDGMENT, MERCY IS PRESENT. AS WE SAW IN PREVIOUS CHAPTERS, NOT EVERYONE IS KILLED. MANY, MOST IN FACT (~~2~~3) ARE SPARED. THE TORMENT OF THE LOCUST IS UNBELIEVABLE, BUT IT IS SHORTENED (5 MONTHS). AND MOST MERCIFUL TO HUMANITY PERHAPS IS THAT NONE OF THIS HAS HAPPENED YET - IT IS WRITTEN BEFOREHAND TO WAKE US UP.

AND YET, THOUGH MERCY LONGS TO TRIUMPH OVER JUDGMENT - IT DOES NOT WHEN IT IS NOT ACCEPTED AND EMBRACED. THE WORLD IS BEING INVITED TO BELIEVE AND BE SAVED, AND YET IT WILL SAY "NO" RIGHT TO MERCY'S FACE.

IF THIS IS TROUBLING TO YOU, IT IS BECAUSE YOU ARE REALIZING WHAT IS AT STAKE. IT SHOULD TROUBLE YOU. AND IT SHOULD BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES FOR THE WORLD.