

Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School
Revelation Bible Study
Chapter 9

Introduction (1:1 - 3:22)

(Including Seven Letters to the Seven Churches - preparation / call for repentance)

The Inaugural Vision of Heaven, Introducing the Message (4:1 - 5:14)

The Prophecy (6:1 - 16:21)

1. First Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End - Seven Seals (6:1 - 8:5)
2. Second Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End - Disorders in nature accompanied by sufferings of evil afflict humanity - Seven Trumpets (8:6 - 11:19)
 - A. Trumpets One through Four - upheavals in nature (8:6 - 13)
 - B. Trumpets Five and Six - Demons from the Abyss and the Last Bible (9:1-21)
 - C. First Scene of the Interlude - The Mighty Angel from Heaven Commissions John (10:1-11)
 - D. Second Scene of the Interlude - The Temple measured and the Two Witnesses (11:1-14)
 - E. Seventh Trumpet - The End and its Joy (11:15-19)
3. Interlude - The Cosmic War between Christ and Satan, between God's saints and the forces of evil (12:1 - 14:20)
4. Third Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End: Plagues of God's Wrath as God's Judgment is poured out on the human race (15:1 - 16:21)

The Conclusion: The End and the New Heaven and New Earth (17:1 - 22:5)

Epilogue (22:6-21)

Introduction to final three trumpets:

- 8:13 gave us the information that the final three trumpets would also be called "Woes"
- These are, thus far in Revelation, some of the sharpest scenes we have seen so far in Revelation. The words of the angel in 8:13 are, indeed, true!
- The descriptions given are in much more detail than we have seen. The locusts with human and animal features - and later the two hundred million troops (9:16-19) are not visible except to the human imagination. This means that whatever the fifth and sixth scenes all involve is not within natural human understanding and experience but is of the supernatural and thus understood only within the spiritual realm.

9:1-2) Fifth trumpet - star with key to the Abyss

- Identity of the star:
 - o Has a personal name (Abaddon - Hebrew / Apollyon - Greek) - 9:11
 - o "Angel of the Abyss" - 9:11
 - o "fallen from the sky to the earth" - 9:1

- Unmistakable Identity: Satan (see also Luke 10:18)
- This is the first mention of Satan in Revelation
 - Chapter 12 - he will appear as the dragon, the archenemy of Christ and the church on earth
 - Chapter 13 - two beasts and Babylon
 - Chapter 16 - perpetrator of Armageddon
 - Chapter 20 - Gog and Magog
 - Chapter 19/20 - at the Second Coming of Christ he will be cast into hell forever
- Smoke darkens the world
 - Spiritual darkness (see also Genesis 19:27-28)

9:3-11) Locusts

- (see Plague of Locusts - Exodus 10:1-20....also Joel 1:1 - 2:11)
- to afflict only those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads
 - later in Revelation will Satan direct his venom against the Church (chapters 12-13)
 - Refer back to chapter 7 for the discussion about the “seal of God” (reference to Baptism and the fact we have the stamp of God’s authenticity upon us)
- “were given”
 - A reminder that God has set His limits around what Satan can do
 - See also Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6
 - God’s will is for the salvation of the sinner (Ezekiel 18:23; 1 Timothy 2:2; 2 Peter 3:9) - Satan and his minions can only go so far
- “five months”
 - Temporary, not continual (perhaps patterned after the life cycle of the locust)
 - However temporary the pain, it will be terrible - see 9:6
 - See also Job 3:20-26
- “like crowns of gold” - 9:7
 - Seems to reinforce the notion these are not originated from God but are a cheap knock off imitation

- “hair like women’s hair” - 9:8
 - o They will act with human intelligence in cunning deception as well as with human beauty in cruel attraction
- Soldier’s description - 9:9-10
 - o Satan and his minions mean business and will seek to protect themselves from counterattack
- Sad result: no repentance - 9:20

9:13) Sixth Trumpet

9:14-15) Four angels from the Great River Euphrates

- Euphrates was both the furthest extent of influence by the Old Testament Kingdom of David and Solomon AND it was the place from which many of Israel’s enemies came (see Isaiah 8:1-10; 2 Kings 25:1-26)
- “Euphrates” - the geographical label for OT Israel’s *historical* enemies - becomes the label for the eschatological enemies of God and His people
- Kept / prepared for that very time (9:15)
 - o Suggests this is not descriptive of some ongoing event stretching from the ascension of Jesus until His return
- Identity?
 - o Certainly could be descriptive of some of Satan’s minions
 - o However, unless otherwise qualified, the word “angel” in Revelation never refers to Satan or his angels
 - Two exceptions (and both are qualified): 9:11 - “angel of the Abyss” and 12:7-9 - “the dragon’s angels”
 - o Brings us to the reality they are holy angels with the specific duty of judgment and punishment (see Genesis 19:1-29)
- Time reference
 - o Day - month - year
 - o Nowhere else in Scripture is this phrase used
 - o Certainly a definitely prescribed time section (limited, of course, by God Himself)... since it occurs in the sixth trumpet, it could be describing something closer to the end - but that interpretation is not an entirely strong interpretation.

- Destroy a third of mankind

9:16-19) The forces unleashed by the four angels

- Reminiscent of the locusts at the beginning of chapter 9
- “The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails”
 - o They kill by their mouths (spewing the smoke and sulfur)
 - o They inflict injury by their tails
 - o This suggests that the 2/3 of humanity that is not killed is nevertheless tormented and made to suffer.

9:20-21) The sad result - no repentance

- They do not let themselves be turned away from worshiping the “works of their hands”
 - o “work of their hands” is an expression for the entire spectrum of human activities in life
 - o See also Psalm 115:4-7
 - o What are the idols in you life / our lives that are mute, deaf, blind and unable to act for us?
- Murders, magic arts, sexual immorality, thefts
 - o Murders, sexual immorality, thefts
 - Not much has changed in 19 millennia, has it?
 - o “magic arts”
 - NLT translates as “witchcraft”
 - The term includes the idea of casting spells, sorcery, often involving drugs. Modern equivalents to these evils certainly include witchcraft; both “good,” or “white,” and evil, or “black,” magic; all kinds of occult practices and spiritism, including attempts to divine the future, for example, by horoscopes and psychics; and the abuse of drugs.

Reminder:

- 1) Email your questions to Pastor Bill: billm@deeplyrootedtogrow.org
- 2) You can access these study guides on the church website. Navigate under “Ministries” to “Bible Studies” to the download page for the Revelation study.