

(9.1) And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

1. Revelation 8.13 again: “And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” This verse shows that this fifth trumpet blast is also the first of the woes to befall the unsaved portion of humanity that was warned in Revelation 8.13. From Exodus, certain plagues that befell Egypt afflicted everyone, while some of the last ones afflicted only the Egyptians, leaving the Israelites untouched. Such is what I believe we have here.
2. When the trumpet sounded, John saw something. We read that John saw a star fall from heaven. The late Jack Hyles, in his little book entitled “Let’s Study Revelation,” says that the word translated “fall” should be translated “fallen” instead.<sup>1</sup> Examining the Greek New Testament, we see that the Greek word πεπωκότα is the perfect tense of πίπτω, referring to the past action of falling with continuing results.<sup>2</sup> John indicates that he saw something that had already fallen from heaven. The word “fall,” being a perfect participle, means that the action had been completed when John saw it.
3. What John gazed upon was a fallen star, which had fallen from heaven to earth. Look at the verse again very closely. We know that John is not referring to a literal star falling because, in the same sentence and referring to the same star, John tells us that “to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.”
4. Since keys cannot be given to inanimate objects, this star must be intelligent. Thankfully, the Bible gives us some clues regarding the identity of this creature. Following are verses that refer to an intelligent being falling from heaven:

Isaiah 14.12-14:

- <sup>12</sup> How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
- <sup>13</sup> For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
- <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Luke 10.17-18:

- <sup>17</sup> And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Hyles, *Let’s Study The Revelation*, (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1967), page 52.

<sup>2</sup> Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 831.

<sup>18</sup> And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

Revelation 12.7-9:

<sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,  
<sup>8</sup> And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.  
<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

5. The star John refers to here can be none other than Satan. There are two options to consider when seeking to precisely understand what John is referring to here: Option #1, John is referring to Satan being cast out of heaven because of his sin in the distant past. In terms of chronology, this occurred before Adam and Eve fell into sin. Option #2, John is referring to Satan being cast down to the earth sometime after the Rapture, after being defeated by Michael, the archangel.
6. To this point, let us recognize that either option is hypothetically possible. How can this be? God cast out Satan, along with one-third of the host of heaven, who followed him in his futile rebellion against God. However, Job chapters 1 and 2 show us that God periodically demands an accounting of Satan, even in his fallen condition.<sup>3</sup>
7. We will see which of these two options is correct as our study of Revelation continues. To avoid being caught up in speculation, focus on what John seems to be directing our attention to. Satan will be given the key to the bottomless pit.
8. From Revelation 1.18, we remember that the Lord Jesus Christ claims to have “the keys of hell and of death.” Absent any other evidence, we would rightly suspect that the “key of the bottomless pit” would also be under His control and that He is the One Who gave the key to Satan. Therefore, the first woe occurs when the Lord Jesus Christ, at the sound of the trumpet, provides the key to “the bottomless pit” to Satan.
9. I attribute this giving of the key to the Lord Jesus Christ because Greek grammarians refer to giving something in such a case as this, wherein the one who does the giving is not named as a theological or a divine passive.<sup>4</sup> Others would interpret this as meaning God gives the key to Satan.
10. Important to note is that this key that will be given is the key to the “bottomless pit.” What is the “bottomless pit”? The word translated “bottomless pit” is the

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<sup>3</sup> I reject the assertion by the late Michael S. Heiser, *Demons: What The Bible Really Says About The Powers Of Darkness*, (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), pages 76-78, that the Hebrew term translated Satan is a mistranslation.

<sup>4</sup> Rienecker, pages 831-832.

Greek word ἄβυσσος, which means “an immensely deep space.”<sup>5</sup> It is also where Jesus went, according to Romans 10.7: “Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” The word “deep” in that verse is the same word.

11. If you are a bit confused, remember two things: *First*, Hell describes a state of being dead more appropriately than a geographical location. The “bottomless pit” is a better term for describing *where* the unsaved dead now is, where many fallen angels are, and where Jesus went for three days and nights before His resurrection. *Second*, in the absence of any distinction between the geographical location where lost people go when they enter eternity and what spiritual state they are in when they enter eternity, the word Hell is generally used. However, if you want to be specific and distinguish between the location of some unsaved person who has died and the spiritual state of some unsaved person who has died, you would use the term “bottomless pit” to refer to the location and the word Hell to refer to his state of being.
12. “That there is a passage from the earth to its heart not only is indicated by Scripture, but what believed by the ancient Greeks, and is today known by the followers of Satan.”<sup>6</sup> That Satan will someday be given the key to open that accessway to the earth’s bowels, where the “bottomless pit” is, where those experiencing what we call Hell to abide, will be a fearful thing for humanity.

(9.2) And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose 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.

1. Some commentators have difficulty accepting the evidence pointing to the star being Satan because they cannot conceive of why God would give Satan the key to the bottomless pit, or more correctly translated, the great abyss. However, the answer to that dilemma is simple. God gave the key to Satan, knowing he would open the bottomless pit because God wanted the bottomless pit opened.
2. God allows Hell to come up to the earth’s surface at the sound of the trumpet and the pit’s opening. I say Hell because I agree with William Newell when he indicates in his commentary on Revelation that the bottomless pit, or the great abyss, is a geographical region in which New Testament Hades, Old Testament Sheol, or what we call Hell, is. Hell, then, is a state of existence, while the great abyss is the place of existence for those who die without Christ and fallen angels who have been confined since their attack upon humanity recorded in Genesis 6.1-4.
3. Consider Genesis 6.1-4 in this regard:
  - 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

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<sup>5</sup> Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), page 2.

<sup>6</sup> William R. Newell, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1935), page 128.

- 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.
- 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.
- 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

- a. Verse 2. “Sons of God,” plural, is a phrase applied only to individuals God creates. Adam and all the angels created by God and all born-again people are “sons of God.” We do not have Adam or born-again people referred to in this verse, but angels. From their behavior, we safely conclude that these are fallen angels who are in rebellion with Satan against God. These fallen angels sought to procreate using human women to produce an unredeemable race of superhuman hybrids.
- b. Verse 3. God’s response to this attack upon the human race in an attempt to defeat Him is to set a date at which time judgment will fall. In retrospect, we know God’s judgment was the Flood, in which every living thing was destroyed, save what had safely boarded the Ark.
- c. Verse 4. The giants referred to here are the product of the unholy union between fallen angels and unsaved women. Since angels are not human and cannot, therefore, suffer physical death, I contend that when the Flood came, and God killed all humans, He at the very same time confined those wicked and mighty fallen angels who had so attacked the human race in the bottomless pit, the great abyss. When the events of Revelation 9.2 occur, these strong demons are loosed from imprisonment to wreak havoc on the human race.

4. When the entrance to the pit is unlocked and opened, the smoke from the furnace of Hell will belch forth and blot out the sun.

(9.3) And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

1. This part gets a little scary. Remember where the locusts come from ... the bottomless pit, or the great abyss, which is Hell. They come spewing forth with the smoke.
2. These locusts have power in a way that resembles the ability that scorpions of the earth’s surface have power. What kinds of power do scorpions on the earth’s surface have? They can sting and inflict great pain, even though their stings rarely result in death. These Hellish locusts have similar capabilities.

(9.4) And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

1. We have additional proof that these are not ordinary locusts. Locusts usually eat vegetation, but these locusts from the pit harm only those who do not have the seal of God on their forehead. That is, they torment only those who are not saved.
2. So far, in Revelation, only the 144,000 are described as having the seal of God on their foreheads. This leads some Bible teachers to believe that these locusts will attack not only unbelievers but also believers who are not part of the company of 144,000 Jews.
3. However, I have some valid reasons for maintaining that these locusts will not attack believers:
  - a. First, Revelation 8.13 indicates that these last three trumpet judgments will only fall upon “inhabiters of the earth,” lost folks.
  - b. Second, because there is circumstantial evidence to support the idea that every believer has the seal of God, even though only 144,000 are specifically said to be so marked.
  - c. Finally, allowing these creatures to attack God’s Own children is worse than throwing the baby out with the bath water. There is no legitimate reason in Scripture why God would want to vent His wrath in such a way on those who are His Own children.

(9.5) And to them it was given 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 he striketh a man.

1. The locusts will inflict great pain upon the people, but they will not be allowed to kill anyone. The torment of their stings lasts for five months.
2. The torture from these creatures must be painful if you have ever heard of the extreme pain that ordinary scorpions cause when they sting.

(9.6) And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

1. God’s wrath will be poured out uniquely during this future time of great tribulation. God is giving unsaved men, I believe, a brief glimpse of the torments of Hell. And what do the lost do? They seek to kill themselves and go to Hell!
2. It is just like unregenerate men that nothing will move them to repent their sins unless the Holy Spirit explicitly deals in their lives.
3. Just imagine the pain that is so extreme that millions of people are attempting to commit suicide because of it. Rather than turn to God, in Christ, for relief, they turn to death, only to find that their torment will not end.

4. This will be a foreshadowing of Hell for those people—conscious, never-ending physical and mental torture from which there is no escape.

(9.7-10) <sup>7</sup> And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.  
<sup>8</sup> And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.  
<sup>9</sup> 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 running to battle.  
<sup>10</sup> And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

1. “The description of the locusts given in these verses makes it clear that they are not ordinary locusts and are so named only because of their function as a judgment and plague from the Lord. They apparently are much larger than ordinary locusts and are compared to horses prepared for battle. Inasmuch as demons do not have physical shape, what John is seeing must symbolize demonic possession. The locusts are described as having crowns of gold on their heads, ordinarily a token of victory, but here apparently a decoration or headdress. Their faces are described as similar to the faces of men. Their hair is described as the hair of women and their teeth as the teeth of lions. This awesome combination of the qualities of beasts and men depicts the utterly fearful character of these instruments of divine judgment. This is in keeping with the general character of the book of Revelation as an unmasking of the true nature of Satan and evil.”<sup>7</sup>
2. “In verse 9, the locusts are declared to have breastplates of iron, implying that they are immune to destruction. They are also equipped with wings which give forth the sound of many chariots going to battle, implying speed and the impossibility of evading their attack. Particular attention is given to their tails, which are compared to those of scorpions and by which they have power to hurt men for five months. It would be difficult to describe a more fearful spectacle than these instruments of divine justice, utterly wicked in themselves, and released from the pit of the abyss to accomplish this terrifying judgment. The fact that they have power to hurt men five months is repeated in verse 10, as if to call special attention to the length of their torment.”<sup>8</sup>
3. Sale-Harrison writes: “It is very interesting to notice how many similes are used in verses 7 to 10. These Satanic agents are said to be ‘like horses prepared for battle’ (v. 7) - anxious and ready to carry out their commission. On their heads, as it were, ‘crowns like gold’ (v. 7). They pretend to have royal authority. They have ‘faces like men’ (v. 7). They appeal to the reason. ‘Hair like women’ (v. 8). They are subtle. ‘Teeth like lions’ (v. 8). They are relentless in cruelty. ‘Breastplates like iron’ (v. 9). Through which truth cannot penetrate. The ‘sound of their wings is like the sound of a conquering host’ (v. 9). They have ‘tails like scorpions.’ Stings in their tails (v. 10).”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), pages 162-163.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, page 163.

<sup>9</sup> L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Revelation*, (New York: Sale-Harrison Publications, 1930), pages 107-108.

4. Though there will be variations of opinions from commentator to commentator as to the likely meanings of these different similes, one thing is self-evident; the judgment God will inflict upon those who reject the truth and believe the lies of Satan will be severe.

(9.11) And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

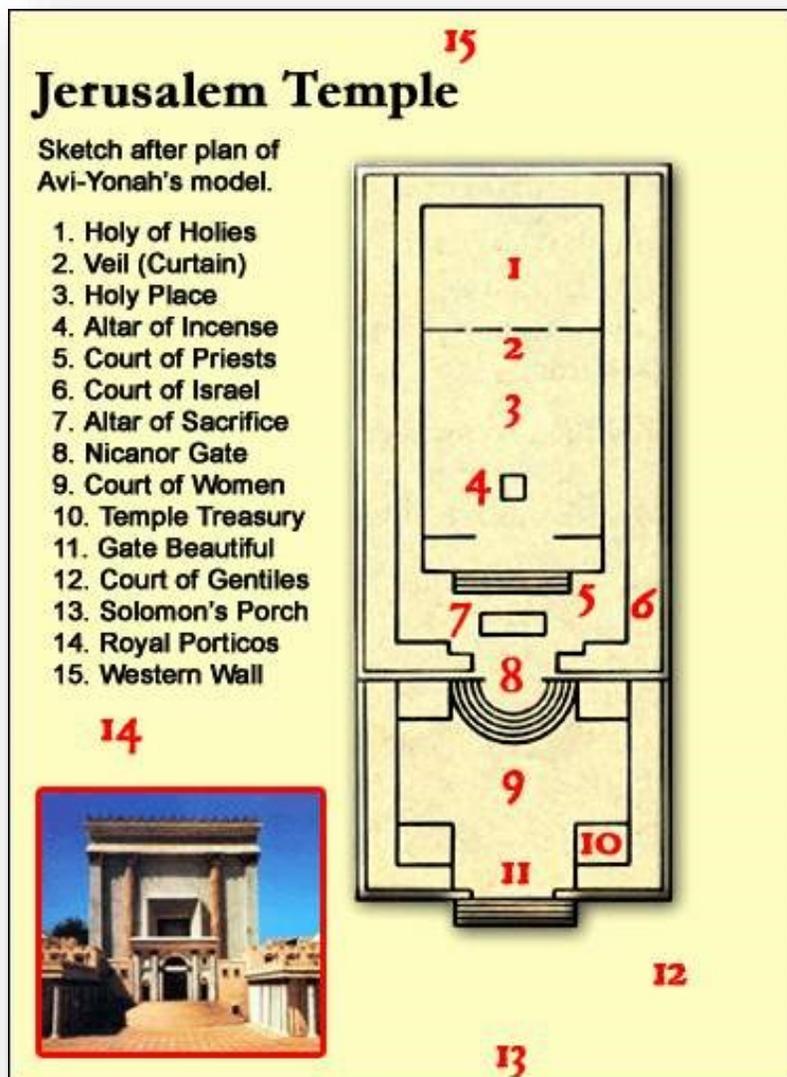
1. Another indication that John is not referring to ordinary locusts comes from Proverbs 30.27, where Solomon indicates that ordinary locusts have no king. However, these locusts, who I believe to be demons, have a king.
2. Their ruler is the angel of the bottomless pit, and he is not Satan. Satan is not confined to the bottomless pit, as this Abaddon is. Satan will not be bound to the bottomless pit until the Second Coming of Christ. No, this Abaddon, this Apollyon, is a mighty and wicked angel who followed Lucifer in his revolt against God.
3. While Lucifer was given to be the prince of the power of the air, this angel was cast into the great abyss. When Satan opens the door to Hell, this Abaddon, or Apollyon, comes out with his army of supernatural locusts who will torment whoever they can.
4. Praise God that they will not be allowed to harm any of God's children. Amen?

(9.12) One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

1. Will God put His children through this? Will we remain on the earth through this terrible suffering?
2. If you understand the clear Biblical distinction between the Christian who lives under the reign of grace and the Israelite who lives under the reign of Law, you will understand two things to be true: First, God has two plans and two programs. One is for Israel and one for Church Age Christianity.
3. In addition, during the Tribulation, God is fulfilling His plan for Israel, having fulfilled His plan for the Church. Second, though there are times and occasions in which woes are predicted for Israel and the wicked Gentiles who surround her, there is no time in which woes are either predicted or pronounced on humanity during the church age, the age in which we live.
4. Therefore, I believe Christians **will not** face this first woe, nor will they face the second two woes.
5. A final comment before we move on: All of this, the environmental catastrophes, the demons from the pit, the torture, and the longing for death for five months, is only the result of the first of the woes. There are two more to go.

(9.13) And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God

1. The sixth of the seven angels sounds like the sixth trumpet, which introduces the second of the three woes. Remember that the judgments that are described as woes are of unimaginable severity.
2. This altar in heaven is described as having four horns, which might indicate that it is similar in appearance to the altar built by the Jews and placed in the courtyard of the Temple. Notice the plan view of the Temple below. The altar in heaven corresponds to the altar of incense, #4 on the plan view below, to help you visualize the heavenly counterpart to the Temple furniture.



3. What is this altar? It may be the same altar mentioned in Revelation 6.9-10, where the souls of the martyred saints were prayed for vengeance against those who slew them for the Word of God.
4. It also seems to be the altar in heaven where God's mercy has been seen. It is the place, I believe, where the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, offered up His Own blood for our sins, thereby satisfying God's holy demand that sin be atoned.
5. The martyrs in Revelation 6.9-10 were put off for a while, but the following few verses suggest that the martyr's prayers are put off no longer.

(9.14) Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

1. From the altar came a voice, literally one voice, which cried out for the loosing of four angels.<sup>10</sup> Since they have been bound, these angels must be fallen or wicked angels. We never read of holy angels being bound in Scripture. But now their release is authorized.
2. These angels had been bound in the great river Euphrates. Were you aware that there was a river Euphrates associated with the Garden of Eden, where the first sin in the human realm was committed? Do you suppose that it is the same river? That is not likely, but there might be some significance in the fact that the two rivers have the same name.
3. What about the antediluvian civilization that waxed so wicked that God destroyed the earth by a flood? Was their civilization near this same river?
4. This same river saw the rise of that monument to idolatry and rebellion against God, the tower of Babel. This same river saw the rise of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, which would participate in the destruction of Israel and then Judah, followed by the razing of Jerusalem.
5. Quite a river, this Euphrates. Four angels, which had been bound in this river, possibly since Genesis chapter 6, are finally released during the Great Tribulation. Why are they released? Perhaps in answer to the prayers of the saints under the altar in Revelation 6.9-10, to judge and avenge them that dwell on the earth.

(9.15) And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

1. The four angels will be loosed. The Greek text reads, "the hour and day and month and year."<sup>11</sup> Thus, a designated hour of a particular day of a specific month of a

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<sup>10</sup> See Revelation 9.13 in *Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, (London: Trinitarian Bible Society), page 461.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

definite year has been set aside by God, Who is so infinite and powerful that absolutely nothing takes place without His divine permission.

2. These angels, presumably fallen angels that we would typically think of as demons, will have the power to destroy one-third of the human race.
3. If you remember that to this point, one-fourth of humanity has already been destroyed since the Rapture occurred, then you must realize that when these forces of Satan finish their work half of humanity that populates the world at the time the Rapture occurs will have been slain before the second coming of Christ.
4. Read verse 16, and see what forces these four angels marshal against humanity.

(9.16) And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

1. An army, or armies (since the Greek word here is plural)<sup>12</sup> of 200,000,000 horsemen. It is like the Army of the Potomac and other troops during the Civil War: several armies, but all the same United States Army.
2. John saw the army, but he heard the number of them, obviously not counting 200,000,000 soldiers himself.
3. Do not make the mistake that I have made in the past of assuming that this army of 200,000,000 horsemen is necessarily connected to the kings of the East mentioned in Revelation 16.12: “And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”
4. I believe that since the circumstances are different in Revelation chapters 9 and 16, two other events in history during the Tribulation could be referred to in these separate passages.
5. There are differences among commentators about the identity of this 200,000,000-strong army. Lehman Strauss thinks this is an army of men, “the combined power of the devil and men acting in their own interest, and, yet, at the same time, they are ignorantly carrying out God’s judicial will.”<sup>13</sup> J. Vernon McGee believes this is not a human army but marks the “wholesale invasion of the demon world, which is a further result of Satan opening the door of the shaft of the bottomless pit.”<sup>14</sup>
6. What is my position? I am not sure. Remember that in the recent war, the United States waged in Afghanistan, our special forces elements resorted to moving cross-

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 195.

<sup>14</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part I*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 77.

country on horseback on several occasions. Could an army of 200,000,000 do the same thing? Not now. But in several years? Perhaps.

7. Regardless of the specific take you have on this verse, do not lose sight of the fact that God will authorize His angel to unloose four fallen angels, who will, in turn, be responsible for some force of 200,000,000 enemy soldiers of some kind, either demon-empowered men or demons themselves, who will kill one-third of the human race, or as it stands now, more than one billion people.

(9.17) And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

1. We have two descriptions in this one verse. John describes the defensive armor of the horsemen, and then he tells the offensive weaponry of the horses.
2. Notice some quite peculiar things:
  - a. First, the horsemen are not called men in this verse. They are described as “them that sat on them.” That does not necessarily mean the riders are not men; they could be men.
  - b. Second, the horses may not be literal horses since their heads “*were as the heads of lions.*” They are either horse-like creatures or horses with an apparatus placed over their heads to protect them.
  - c. Third, with the “horsemen” defenses and the “horses” offensive capability, there is fire, smoke, and brimstone.

(9.18) By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

1. Notice that the horses with lion’s heads kill one-third of surviving humanity.
2. Maybe the horsemen control the actions of the beasts they ride since it is the “fire and smoke and brimstone” responsible for the carnage and death.

(9.19) For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

1. They cannot be real horses, can they? With the power to kill in their tails, they have to be beings of a different sort than we have ever seen before, unless this refers to some high-technology weaponry mounted on horses.
2. Why mounted on horses? Horses can traverse rough terrain that no high-tech machine can negotiate. Therefore, it is at least possible that these are horses used by tomorrow’s armed forces.

3. Whether these are men mounted on horses equipped with high-technology weaponry, or a vast mass of demons unleashed on the world, the effect will be mind-numbing destruction and deaths due to the four fallen angels released at God's command.
4. However you view these verses, think about the events of this chapter. The trap door to Hell is opened, and locust-like beasts come out and inflict great pain on all humanity. Then, Satan's warlord, Abaddon, comes forth from the pit. Then four angels are loosed. Finally, an unusual army of 200,000,000 is unloosed.
5. No matter what these 200,000,000 are, all can agree that they are forces of evil that are going about killing human beings of their own free will. But notice how the actions of those opposed to God always advance God's plan and fulfill His purpose.
6. That God is sovereign and rules over all does not detract from His created beings' free will to act out the inclinations of their own natures. Satan can do what he will, and it will end up suiting God.

(9.20-21) <sup>20</sup> And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

<sup>21</sup> Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

1. One-third of all those alive on earth at the time are slain for their sins, and what happens? With well over a billion and a half corpses lying in the streets and countryside, the essential nature of lost humanity remains unchanged without a new heart that can only come from God.
2. Notice how God-rejecting man is characterized during the Great Tribulation when sin runs unchecked by the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.
3. Idolatry runs rampant. Man will not turn from his demon worship. And the bowing down before statues and idols is demonic; you can be sure. The Bible teaches that all of the gods of the heathen are demons. Therefore, idolatry and demon worship are the same, according to Psalm 96.5:

“For all the gods of the nations *are* idols”

and according to First Corinthians 10.20:

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”

4. “Neither repented they” The word “repented” is the verb form the familiar Greek term μετάνοια. “The word μετανοέω, *metanoeo*, expresses the true NT idea of the spiritual change implied in a sinner’s return to God. The term signifies ‘to have another mind,’ to change the opinion or purpose with regard to sin.”<sup>15</sup> So, though so many will die, those who remain alive in their sins will remain unchanged toward their sins.
5. “of their murders” How much is the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill” ignored these days? During that time, in the not-too-distant future, people will even more flagrantly despise the lives of their fellows.
6. “Nor of their sorceries” This word comes from the Greek word φάρμακον, which gives us the English word “pharmacy.” I think this phrase means that unregenerate man will not repent of his consorting with occultism or demons and his use of and reliance upon drugs.
  - a. Down through history, drugs were frequently used in pagan societies to weaken the minds of heathen worshipers.
  - b. Thus, I think God’s Word predicted, 2000 years ago, an ever-increasing dependence on artificial stimulants and depressants associated with familiarity with spirits.
  - c. People smoke dope to feel good and have a good time. People smoke cigarettes to desensitize their nervous system. People take alcohol to relax and make themselves feel good.
  - d. I wonder how many people use prescription medication to alter their mood so they do not need to seek the consolation and comfort that should come only from God?
  - e. We know that the unregenerate will not repent of these things, but Christians will. One of the characteristics of the Christian life is repentance.
  - f. The Bible hits hard against using alcohol for any other use than for legitimate medicinal purposes.<sup>16</sup> The Bible points out that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Treat them right. Do not abuse them with chemicals.
  - g. The child of God will repent. Biblical repentance, it must be understood, is both an acknowledgment of wrongdoing *and* a forsaking of sinful behavior.

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<sup>15</sup> See “Repentance,” II. NEW TESTAMENT TERMS., 2. Repent — “to Change the Mind”, in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol IV*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), pages 2558-2559.

<sup>16</sup> Jack Van Impe with Roger F. Campbell, *Alcohol: The Beloved Enemy*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980) effectively ends the dispute regarding the beverage use of alcohol.

7. “Nor their fornication” Fornication, in God’s Word, is sexual behavior outside the bounds of matrimony. Adultery is sexual activity with someone besides your spouse. Both are extremely wicked in God’s eyes.
  - a. There are two reasons for John’s use of the term fornication instead of adultery.
  - b. Fornication is a more general term and encompasses all illicit sexual conduct. Any sexual misconduct can rightly be termed fornication, while adultery specifically describes a married person having sex with someone they are not married to.
  - c. Another reason for using fornication could be the trend toward having long-term sexual liaisons is becoming so widespread in our world that John used a term that would describe sexual promiscuity of all kinds. In so doing, he told the world as it would be during the Great Tribulation.
  - d. What an insult to God it is to engage in fornication. He gave sex to men and women. He also gave marriage to men and women. And the Author of both sex and marriage has determined they are inseparable. To have one without the other is a rebellion against God’s established plan for humanity.
8. “Nor of their thefts” Mankind will become a generation of thieves, having no respect for others. With the government stealing from citizens to give to other citizens, with renegotiated contracts to get more money instead of a man keeping his word by fulfilling his contract, and all the rest, we see thievery increasing.
9. Verses 20 and 21 show that humanity’s only hope is salvation which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Note: We are about to enter our study of Revelation chapter 10. As we begin, please note that chapter 10 and about half of chapter 11 is an interlude, or a parenthetical section, in the book of Revelation.

If you recall, we have already studied one portion of this book of Revelation, which was a parenthesis. We noticed something as we explored the opening of the seven seals of the scroll, which was handed to Christ. We noticed that as we went through the opening of the first six seals, we became conscious of being quite depressed.

But in just the right place to lift our spirits, the Lord placed chapter 7 in our way, between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. That seventh chapter gave us a real breather. Chapter 10 and part of Chapter 11 are similar to John’s Revelation.