

Revelation Chapter 9 Continued

Revelation 9:12 "One woe is past; [and], behold, there come two woes more hereafter."

“Woe”: The first of the final 3 trumpets (see note on 8:13).

As if this is not terrible enough that we have been hearing about, there are two more woes. The open warfare on the streets of Lebanon and Israel remind us very much of the things we read about in the last lesson. A mother in that area of the world has no idea when her family leaves the house whether they will return alive or not.

The descendants of Ishmael and Isaac (the flesh and the spirit), are still in mortal combat after all the thousands of years that have passed. Just as there is a spiritual battle of the flesh and the spirit that we must face each day, there is a physical battle in Israel between the Arab and the Jew. Ishmael was told that his descendants would live around the Jews and would be fighting continuously.

The Bible is true. A woe is a terrible calamity.

Verses 13-15: The “sixth” trumpet results in the death of a “third” of the surviving unbelievers on the earth. The “four” bound “angels” are fallen angels or demons who have been temporarily “bound” by God. They are “loosed for the purpose of killing a “third” of the population of the world. They appear to be in charge of the horde of demonic horsemen who will actually accomplish the massacre (verses 16-19). The “river Euphrates” was the northeastern boundary of both the Roman Empire and the promised kingdom of Israel (compare Gen. 15:18; Deut. 11:24; Joshua 1:4; Isa. 8:5-8).

Revelation 9:13 "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,"

“Horns of the golden altar”: God’s design for the golden altar of incense included small protrusions (horns), on each corner (Exodus 30:2; see note on 6:9). Normally a place of mercy, as God responds to His people’s prayers, the altar will resound with a cry for vengeance.

The number six indicates man or mankind. "Horns" mean power and strength. The number four means worldwide. This "golden altar" is where God is. God is never associated with other metals.

Of course, we know the four beasts spiritually mean the four gospels. Certainly, the gospels are powerful. The nearness to the throne here could indicate, from the spiritual standpoint, the power of the gospel which would go to the four corners of the world. They did issue from God. Whether spiritual or physical, they are carrying a message from God to loose the four angels in the Euphrates River as we read in the next verse.

Revelation 9:14 "Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."

“Four angels”: Scripture never refers to holy angels as being bound. These are fallen angels, another segment of Satan’s force whom God had bound, but will free to accomplish His judgment through their horsemen (verses 15-19). God’s control extends even to the demonic forces, they are bound or freed at His command.

Euphrates. One of the 4 rivers that flowed through the Garden of Eden (see note on 16:12; compare Gen. 2:14). Starting with Babel, this region has spawned many of the world’s pagan religions.

The Sixth Trumpet: The Four Angels Released. At the blowing of the 6th trumpet, the second woe is released: the release of "the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates". The angels apparently lead an army of 200 million "horsemen" (demons), who kill a third of mankind through the plagues of fire and smoke and brimstone.

God views the Euphrates River as the dividing line between East and West. In fact, the old Roman Empire also saw it that way. Everything east of the Euphrates was called the Far East or Asia. The region just to the west of the great river was known as the Near East or Asia Minor.

The Euphrates symbolically was where Israel's enemies came from (they thought).

Revelation 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."

“An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year”: God works according to His predetermined plan (compare Mark 24:36; Acts 1:7).

When these angels are loosed, they immediately inspire the great population centers of Asia to launch an attack on the Western and Middle Eastern strongholds. These demons are effective, because they cause almost two billion people, a third of the remaining population, to be killed in short order.

The Apostle John wrote, "And the four angels, who had been prepared for the Hour and Day and Month and Year, are released, so that they might kill a third of mankind. And the number of the armies of the horsemen (demons), was 200 million; I heard the number of them."

Verses 16-19: John “heard” the “number” of the “horsemen” that was 200,000,000; literally, “two myriads of myriads”. Although the majority of manuscripts reads “a myriad of myriads”, or 100,000,000 (compare 5:11; Psalm 68:17; Dan. 7:10). John had no time to count such a large “army”. The riders (and perhaps the horses), wore “breastplates”. An armored cavalry was always a most formidable opponent. “Brimstone” is yellow Sulphur. The “heads of lions” symbolize cruelty and destruction. The “fire, smoke,” and “brimstone” are three separate

plagues, which together kill a “third” of mankind. In light of their description, and the fact that they are ruled by four fallen angels, these horses and riders are probably demons as well. The demons of the fifth trumpet (which were compared to scorpions), do not kill, but these demon riders do kill. Their “power” to kill is in the “mouth”, from which come the “fire”, “smoke”, and “brimstone”. Their “tails” have “heads” like “serpents”, with the “power” to “hurt” people. This sixth trumpet, combined with the fourth seal (6:8), reduces the population of the earth to one half its pre-Tribulation level.

Revelation 9:16 "And the number of the army of the horsemen [were] two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."

“The army”: Some see this as a reference to forces accompanying the kings of the east (16:12), and identify them with a human army coming from Asia. But that event occurs in connection with the seventh trumpet, not the sixth. The language is better understood as referring to a demon force that makes war with the earth’s inhabitants and kills one-third of humanity (verse 15).

Now in addition to the demons who have roamed the earth throughout history, spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12), recently cast to earth (9:1; 12:4), and the numerous demons recently released from the abyss at the sounding of the 5th trumpet, comes a new demonic army that is two hundred million strong.

Some have suggested that the 200 million will come from the Chinese who can currently field an army of that size. However, it is very doubtful this could be a human army due to the inability to equip, feed, transport, not to mention the water it would take to support that size contingent. Those things taken into consideration strongly suggest this will be a supernatural rather than a human force, especially as the four angels (demons), are commanding this force.

When you combine this 3rd with the quarter of humanity killed in the seal judgments, by this point in the Tribulation half of the world's population (after the rapture), already has been destroyed. Tim LaHaye makes reference to the Chinese army which can raise a 200 million man army now. That has prompted some interpreters to suggest the 200 million would come with the kings of the east to do battle with Christ at the consummation of the end of this age, known as the Battle of Armageddon. While there is no question that the armies of the Orient coming to that battle at the very end of the Tribulation will be enormous, due to the incredible population of those countries, they definitely are not the (Rev. 9:16), army. Consider the following reasons:

- (1) The (9:16), army goes out during the 6th trumpet, which occurs towards the beginning of the Great Tribulation; the (16:12), army goes out at the end of the Great Tribulation.
- (2) The 200 million (in 9:16), are not humans but demons, doing things men cannot do. These "horsemen" have a supernatural effect on the earth.
- (3) The Chinese army would include all the men and women under arms in China, including their local militias or defense forces. There is no way the communist government could risk committing all its military and armament to the Middle East, for they know their freedom hungry citizens would revolt before they returned. Besides, the logistics of moving an army of 200 million from the Orient across the Euphrates and the Arabian Desert to the little land of Israel seems impossible.

Tim LaHaye states that the 200 million are not to be taken as humans. They are a literal unnatural, demon like evil spirits that come out of the abyss, advancing under the leadership of the four bound angels. Only the unrepentant will be killed by this judgment.

For these and other reasons not mentioned, it is not realistic to assume that the armies (of 16:12), are synonymous with those of (9:16). The 200 million horsemen who come on the scene will obviously be supernatural, creatures that are so awesome to look on that they actually frighten some people to death. And their sting "is in their mouth and their tails", and with them they kill one third of the world's population of those who reject Christ and commit themselves to Antichrist.

Revelation 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."

"Breastplates" (see note on verse 9).

"Brimstone": Brimstone is a yellowish, sulfuric rock that often attends fire and smoke in Revelation (14:10; 19:20; 20:10). Common in the Dead Sea region, when ignited such deposits melt and produce burning streams and suffocating gas.

Horses have been often associated with warfare in scripture. It is clear these are not actual horses judging the heads were as the heads of lions.

Many have tried to associate the meaning of this scripture with weapons of war, but this can't be. John would have no problem with associating a lion's head with what these appeared to look like.

John saw three ways the demon horses killed their victims and all ways depict the violent and devastating fury of hell. They incinerated them with fire, then asphyxiated with smoke and brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.

Revelation 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."

The end result of this demonic 200 million was that a third of the remaining mankind would be killed. Note that a quarter of mankind was killed during the seal judgments, leaving three quarters of the remaining population. As one third is now killed, 50% of mankind now has been killed.

The death of one third of the earth's remaining inhabitants will be the most catastrophic disaster to strike the earth since the flood during the days of Noah.

Revelation 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."

“Tails were like unto serpents and had heads”: John’s language represents the demons’ ability to vent their destructive power in both directions.

Not only were these demonic horses able to kill with their mouths, but also death was in their tails. Their tails are like deadly poisonous serpents. The horse’s tails were not actual serpents as the horses were not actual horses.

But these images are describing the supernatural deadliness of this demon force in terms that one would normally understand in the natural world.

Unlike the demonic scorpion stings of the 5th trumpet judgment, the bites of these demonic creatures will be fatal.

Verses 20-21: By this point in the Tribulation period, most surviving unbelievers will have permanently made up their minds concerning Christ. They will refuse to repent, even under this terrible judgment. Their religious activities will involve “worship” of “idols” and demons (“devils”), and “sorceries” or witchcraft, with the use of magic potions (Greek pharmakon, from which English “pharmacy” derives). Idolatry is in fact, the worship of demons (compare 1 Cor. 10:20). Three of the four sins in verse 21 are specifically prohibited in the Ten Commandments (compare Exodus 20:3-17). For “sorceries” (compare 18:23; 21:8; 22:15; and Galatians 5:20).

God lists 5 sins that are representative of their defiance.

Revelation 9:20 "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:"

“Devils”: Reminiscent of Paul’s comments about idolatry (see note on 1 Cor. 10:19-20); demons impersonate the stone and wood idols men make.

It is so unimaginable that after many years of suffering and death by this time from the horrible judgments of God, combined with the 144,000, the two witnesses, an angel who gives the Word of God to humans, not to mention the countless number of Tribulation Saints, that the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent.

These "men" are not just males, but all of mankind. Women will have to answer for their own actions, as well as the men. What in the world has to happen before they will repent? All of these things worshipped (in verse 20), describes our day. These are things of the world. Trying to out do the neighbors with: a bigger house ("wood or stone"), finer jewelry ("gold and silver"), expensive ornaments ("brass"), and worship of the devil ("worship devils").

All of these things listed are inanimate objects and have no power to accomplish anything.

Anything or anyone who does not elevate Jesus Christ to deity is in error and worshipping the devil. Jesus said Himself that "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30).

We are either on the side of Jesus or the devil. There is no middle ground. We are not to worship God's creations. We are to worship the Creator.

Revelation 9:21 "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

At that future point in history, idolatry, mysticism, spiritism, satanism and all forms of false religion will become the norm as demons lead people into more wicked and vicious behaviors. Violent crimes like murder will be absolutely rampant. Without any sense of morality, the evil, unrepentant people will imitate the demon horde's murderous blood lust. Of course, believers in God will doubtlessly be their prime targets.

“Sorceries”: This Greek word is the root of the English word “pharmacy”. Drugs in the ancient world were used to dull the senses and induce a state suitable for religious experiences such as séances, witchcraft, incantations and cavorting with mediums (21:8; 22:15; see note on Eph. 5:18).

Once again, people will refuse to repent of their sins as the world of unrepentant people compete for the scarce supplies of food, clothing, water, shelter and medicines.

Under the influence of the massive demon forces that has been unleashed upon the world, false religion, murder, sexual perversion and crime will be unparalleled in human history.

The Big Four Sins: (Rev. 9:21), lists the four most prominent sins of the Tribulation period. The significance of these sins is great in light of present trends in the world. It's no coincidence that the four major sins listed here are today four of the most serious problems facing law enforcement.

(1) The first of these characteristic sins is murder. For whatever reason, societal permissiveness, lack of punishment or lack of faith, there has been an alarming increase in murder throughout the US and the world. One factor is the rejection of absolute standards of right and wrong. When a judge who posts the Ten Commandments in his courtroom is sued, you know society has its priorities upside down (Judge Roy Moore of Alabama). Anyone who was awake in the latter part of the 20th century could see the violence around us. I don't think I need to elaborate on this point.

The murder of unborn children in our day is a stench in God's nostrils. Women and men should repent of these murders. Murder with a deadly weapon is not always with a gun or a knife. One of the most useless murders in our day is drunk drivers killing people with their automobiles. Some are drunk on alcohol and some on drugs. All of these are useless killings that do not accomplish anything.

President Clinton vetoed a bill, passed with bi-partisan support in both the house and the senate, that would have prohibited partial birth abortions.

(2) The second prominent sin of the Tribulation era will be drug related occult activities. The word sorceries is used (in Rev. 9:21). It comes from the Greek word meaning pharmacy, and refers here to the practice of the occult tied to the use of drugs.

Drug use in the 1990's doubled from the 1960's and early 70's. In 1997 more than 11% claimed to use drugs every month. According to a study by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University in New York, today's daughters are 15 times more likely than their baby boom mothers to have begun illegal drug use by age 15.

Another category of skyrocketing use is in so called designer drugs, such as methamphetamine. Charles Rangel, Democrat of New York, stated when Bill Clinton was president that "I have never, never, never seen a president who cares less about this issue."

There is a strong link between drug use and demon possession. As far back as 1971, the International Journal of Social Psychiatry dealt with the reality of demon possession and how to diagnose it.

There is a need to ascertain if there is any involvement in drug addiction, as it is common that addicts, especially with heroin and alcohol, become involved with black magic and vice versa. Some have been known in some cases to have been very religious people who defaulted, and thus left themselves open to some power other than God to control their lives.

Sorceries can also be anything associated with the occult: palm reading, horoscope, etc. So many people in our society today are playing around with mind control, transcendental meditation, and other false religions. All of this type of activity is to undermine our belief in God.

(3) The third prominent sin of the Tribulation will be rampant immorality. "Porneia," the Greek word used in this verse, refers to all kinds of sexual activity outside of marriage. Apparently, there will be a complete breakdown in the institution of marriage. Well, folks, as anyone can plainly see, we're almost there!

More than 70,000 women are sexually assaulted every year in the US. (1 every 45 seconds). It is the most rapidly growing violent crime in the country.

Domestic violence is more widespread than ever. Each year between 2 and 4 million women are battered; 1,500 women are murdered by their intimate partners; 1.8 million elderly folks are victims of maltreatment; 1.7 million child abuse reports are filed. Fornication covers living with someone before you are married. Fornication covers being married and dating someone else. Fornication covers all homosexual and lesbian acts.

The US Supreme court rules as unconstitutional Colorado's Amendment 2 to the state constitution, a simple and popular attempt to prohibit local governments from turning homosexuals and other sexual deviates into the latest protected political class. By the court's

reasoning, as dissenting Justice Antonio Scalia pointed out, any state that bans Polygamy is also in trouble.

It's actually a matter of debate in the House of Representatives and US Senate, whether men should be allowed to marry men and women marry women (1997). Unfortunately, at the time of this update (2016), it has become commonplace.

(4) The fourth characteristic of the Tribulation will be thievery of all kinds. Crime in all of its manifestations is on the upsurge today. The experts say a youth crime crisis is right around the corner. At the current growth rate, there will be nearly one half million more adolescent boys in the year 2010 than there are today. That trend would mean there will be 30,000 more chronic juvenile delinquents on the streets in 15 years (from 1997). Though representing only 7% of all male teens, these chronic offenders commit 70% of all serious crime in their age group.

When a nation, founded as one nation under God, gives up its sovereignty under God in favor of "interdependence" on the world, you can see where the future lies. To be a friend of this future system in the sense of compromising God's viewpoint of life and letting the world squeeze you into its mold is to commit adultery, spiritually speaking. Remember also, that in a true relationship with God through Jesus Christ, believers are viewed as being the "Bride" of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). That's another reason that playing around with false religion is viewed throughout the Bible as spiritual adultery.

For the last 30 years, America has been engulfed in a culture war that threatens the nation's very foundation, its very survival. God's word tells us (in Luke 12:48), that "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."

In the history of the world has any nation been more blessed than the US? Yet there is always a cost to immorality. And today we are beginning to pay it. In the past 30 years, there has been a 560% increase in violent crime. Illegitimate births have increased 419%. Divorce rates have tripled. The number of children living in single parent homes has tripled. The teen suicide rate has increased 200%. Student Achievement Tests have plummeted 80 points.

It should not surprise us that Billy Graham said years ago, that if God didn't judge America soon, He would have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. But it's not just the US. The entire world is in a headlong plunge into the morality of Sodom and Gomorrah and unfortunately into the same judgment.

Revelation Chapter 9 Continued Questions

1. How many "...woes..." are there?
2. Name two of Abraham's descendants that are still fighting today?
3. What is a "woe"?

4. Where did the voice come from in verse 13?
5. What means power or strength?
6. Why are there four?
7. The four beasts mean what spiritually?
8. The nearness to the throne of the four could spiritually indicate what?
9. What were they to loose in the Euphrates?
10. What did the Israelites feel the Euphrates meant spiritually?
11. What were the four angels prepared for?
12. How many were in the army of the horsemen?
13. What communist country has an army that large today?
14. Describe the horses.
15. There will be so much bloodshed, it will come to where on the horses?
16. How many are killed?
17. Where is their power?
18. In Matthew 12:30, what did Jesus say?
19. What four things, besides worshipping false deities must they repent of?
20. What is a stench in God's nostrils?
21. Besides with a gun or knife, what is murder?