

Revelation 9 & 10 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Do You Read The End Of A Book Before You're Supposed To?

Some do and some don't.

Those who don't say it's *cheating*.

Those who do say they read the end so that they don't have to worry along the way about what's going to happen.

We Are In A Story

A book - sit in a comfy chair and read.

Bible - we are in it; a part of its story.

We're encouraged to read the ending so that we might be comforted and not worry.

Reading The Middle

Can be confusing: no context; just random bits.

So with out study.

We need to step back and look at the bigger picture.

There Is A Cosmic Struggle Going On Between God and Satan

Man is the prize.

God loves us and wants to bring us to Himself - for eternity.

Satan hates us and wants to ruin us.

We bear the image of the God he hates - so he lashes out to mar, destroy.

Sin is his tactic of slash and burn to bring ruin.

But Satan's reign of terror is *limited* by God.

Though evil is present, it's kept in check by the gracious hand of God.

We see the truth of this in the story of Job (Job 1-3).

God is graciously restraining evil and the ravages of the devil, in spite of mankind's rejection of God and His grace.

Now - here is an amazing thing: God honors the choices people make.

If a person receives Him: He fills them with His love and grace

and peace and promises protection.

But if a person *rejects* Him; He honors that rejection and God owes them nothing.

The time will come when a Christ-rejecting world will receive the full result of refusing Him.

When a person rejects God, they reject all He is and does; including His restraint of evil.

What we are reading about in the 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls is the fruit of mankind's rejection of God.

CHAPTER 9

¹Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

The first 4 of 7 have sounded; they brought judgments on the *physical* creation.

This trumpet announces a supernatural judgment

8:13 - After first 4, an angel announces last three even worse. "Woe"

John sees a star, fallen from heaven to earth.

Clear it's a person "him."

John uses "stars" as a word for angels in Rev. 12:4

The word 'star' refers to their heavenly glory.

Job 38:7 – angels are called stars

This angel has fallen (past tense) - not "falling"

Chief clue - in Isa. 14:12 the question is asked "How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?"

This is Satan (Isa. 14:12-15 1 Tim. 3:6 Luke 10:18)

He was given a key to the bottomless pit.

Key is symbolic of authority (Rev. 1:18)

It's given to him – meaning he is under God's control.

Bottomless pit = abusso; abyss

Luke 16:23 - A place of torment

Luke 8 – Gadarene demoniac

V. 31 "Legion: begged not to be sent there.

2 Pet. 2:4 & Jude 6 - a place where some especially bad demons are kept locked up.

Demons who left their proper place.

Crossed boundary God proscribed – possession.

Why “Legion” in Luke 8 asked *not* to be sent there.

There’s coming a time when they are going to be let loose.

(Isa.24:21-22 Rev. 9:1,2,11 11:7 20:1,3)

2And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. **3**Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. **4**They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. **5**And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for five months*. Their torment *was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man*. **6**In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

John’s description of them proves they aren’t real locusts -

7The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were like the faces of men*. **8**They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ *teeth*. **9**And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. **10**They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was to hurt men five months*. **11**And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is Abaddon*, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

When abyss opened, a great smoke arises that obscures the light of day.

Then, out of the smoke come these demonic bugs.

We ought not understand them to be literal locusts in appearance, but

what is *locust-like* is the way they *swarm* and what they do.
Locusts were a terrible scourge in the Middle East - still are.
Locusts are largest of the grasshopper family and have two phases
of life: solitary and communal.
They become communal when it's very hot and dry.
They go through a physiological change; get bigger, wings enlarge,
head grows.
Then they swarm: multiply rapidly; their numbers become
astronomical!
Been measured in columns 100 feet wide and 4 miles long
One swarm in 1889, crossed the Red Sea and was measured at
2000 sq. miles.
They devour everything green; including the bark off the trees.
When they fly, sound like a vast waterfall.
When they eat, sound like a prairie fire.
Locusts became synonymous with total devastation in the ancient
Middle East and were understood as a judgment from God.

That's what this is – a judgment from God – but it's not *normal*
locusts because they don't eat what's green.
They come to torment those who don't have the seal of God on
their foreheads.
They sting like a scorpion. [Explain]
This plague lasts for 5 months.
Everything about this judgment marks it as supernatural and demonic.
John's description of the bugs in vs 7-11 may mean these demons
that are set loose from the abyss take on a physical
manifestation, or that they are some kind of genetic experiment
gone haywire.
My view – Genetic mistake.
Plagues of Egypt – on gods.
Science & technology trusted & worshipped.
4th horseman – death by the beasts, plagues, and pestilence.
Genetic engineering to combat?
Ladybugs / aphids.
Ants in forests.
Killer bees.
Maybe here – only gone haywire – then demons possess.

These are the demons who do that.

In 2 Peter 2 & Jude 6 it says they are reserved in chains of darkness FOR judgment!

The point is that they bring great suffering to those who aren't sealed.

Rev. 7 – 144,000 Jews.

May be more – Ephesians, all believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

This plague lasts for 5 months, which is the lifespan of a locust – so this may be a sign these are indeed some kind of *genetically engineered pest*.

Torment they inflict so great, people will try to kill themselves – but death will take a holiday at this time.

It will elude them - suicide attempts will be unsuccessful!

Death a manifestation of God's grace!

Release from pain!

Not at this time.

One more manifestation of His grace God removes to confront man with how foolish it is to reject God.

V. 11 clinches the identity of these locusts –

And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

These locusts are not natural for Proverbs 30:27 says natural locusts have no leader, no king

These do - their leader is the angel of the abyss.

In Rev. 20:3, THE angel of the abyss is Satan.

Here he's given the title of Abaddon & Apollyon = "Destroyer"

A fitting name for the devil as Jesus says in John 10 – the devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

12 One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

First 4 trumpets were bad. 5th terrifying. 2 more coming . . .

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

14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet,

“Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” ¹⁵So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. ¹⁷And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed— by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

When the 6th trumpet sounds, John hears a voice from the golden altar of incense we read about in ch. 8.

A command is given to release the 4 angels bound at the Euphrates. Holy angels are never bound so we know these are fallen angels – demons.

They are bound at the River Euphrates, which closely associated with Babylon.

Babylon stands in the Bible, and specially in the book of Revelation as a symbol of the home of wickedness. (Rev. 17-19 18:2)

These demons were bound for a set time, and that time has now come.

Everything happens according to God’s perfect timing.

When they’re released, they go forth to kill 1/3 of humanity.

Add this to the ¼ of the world’s population that has already been killed in 4 horsemen of ch. 6, means that the earth has been reduced to ½ it’s population in about 4 yrs.

And that’s not including those who have died from the other seals and trumpets.

6 billion now – down to 2½ to 3 billion!

Food production / social services!

These 4 angels accomplish their killing spree through the use of an

army.

Is this a literal army or another plague of demons?

John hears the number – 200 million; seems to imply a literal military force.

Also, the description of them, while just as wild and unnerving as that for the locusts, sounds a bit more literal.

In John's day, there were probably not 200 million alive on earth!

At peak strength, the combined forces of the Axis and Allies during WWII was only 70 million.

And yet a few years ago, the premier of China boasted they could field an army of 200 million. Not hard in a nation of nearly 2 billion!

Interesting he should chose that number!

If John is attempting to describe a modern army with modern weapons, we can understand why his description is stretched.

He seems more interested in the mounts of the army than with the men who comprise it.

These mounts are what are responsible for the lethality of the army.

They expel fire, smoke, brimstone (burning sulphur)
Chemical weapons?

We hear a lot about chemical weapons today.

Modern chemical weapons are terrible.

Blister agents: now much worse

Blood agents: hydrogen cyanide

Enter blood and block energy creating enzyme - die of exhaustion within hours

Nerve agents: soman & VX

Odorless and colorless; can be breathed or absorbed through skin.

Impair nerve functions in muscles.

Acetylcholine; causes contractions of muscles -

Cholinesterase; breaks down acetylcholine.

Nerve agents block cholinesterase - muscles contract but don't relax; lungs, heart, limbs.

From what we see here and will see in ch. 16, demons are released who prepare way for the armies of the east to come to the scene of

the end events.

As they make their way toward the Middle East, they wreak great destruction on some of the most populous regions on earth - southern Asia, India.

One would think with the 5th & 6th trumpet judgments, humanity would repent.

But these judgments don't lead to repentance.

They prove to be merely punitive on rebel man.

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

6 sins mentioned.

Interesting because they give us a glimpse of where people's heads will be at.

As we consider them, see if they don't sound a lot like what is happening today.

#1 They worship demons.

Jesus and Paul both tells us that the Tribulation will be a time of widespread religious deception.

Above all, what satan wants is worship.

He will use the career of the antichrist and the many false prophets to spread religious deception and promote the worship of the demonic.

The current growing interest in New Age spirituality is a set up for this.

#2 They worship idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, wood.

Modern man too sophisticated to worship carved images but not too sophisticated to worship wealth, power and possessions.

During the Tribulation, materialism will take over and people will sell their souls for personal gain of worldly luxury.

#3 They are murderers.

The value of human life will reach an all time low.

If someone gets in their way or hinders their pursuit of happiness

they're fair game to be offed.

We see the seeds of this already at work in abortion, infanticide, euthanasia

#4 They are sorcerers.

Pharmakeia; pharmacy - drugs

Drugs/sorcery, witchcraft = synonymous in ancient world - drugs used to enter an altered state.

Demons would come and offer hidden wisdom

This happened in our time with the hippie movement -

hallucinogens; mescaline, LSD. Spirit beings came and imparted wisdom.

When sober, realized Eastern religions taught the same things - door was opened to the East.

This was the birth of the New Age; Western form of Hinduism.

Drugs continue to be a problem as we all well know.

#5 They are sexually immoral.

Doesn't take much explanation

#6 They are thieves.

When the value of human life has been so degraded as it will be at this time, then the rights of personal property slide with it.

This will be a period in which the world will actually work at breaking all 10 of the Ten Commandments!

CHAPTER 10

¹I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. ²He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left foot on the land, ³and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. ⁴Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

⁵The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the

land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, ⁷but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

There's another interlude between 6th and 7th trumpet, just as there was one between the 6th & 7th seal.

John sees a mighty angel descend from heaven and when he speaks, it thunders.

He starts to write what he heard but is told not to.

Why then is this included? Why does John tell us this?

Probably to remind us that we don't know everything.

It's easy to become fond of *our interpretations* of prophecy.

We can guard them like pit bulls guarding a bone.

This passage reminds us we don't know everything.

We need to hold our ideas with a sense of humility and a willingness to be corrected and taught.

The way John describes this angel, many bible students have wondered if this might be no one less than Jesus Christ.

He comes in a cloud – he has a rainbow around him like the rainbow around the throne of God.

His face shines like the sun, as Jesus's face did in chapter 1.

His legs and feet shone like Jesus's did in ch. 1 . . .

Either this is Jesus, or this is an angel who's spent so much time in His presence, he's taken on some of the Lord's appearance, just as Moses' face shone with the glory of God when he descended from mount Sinai.

Paul says in 2 Cor. that as we spend time with the Lord, we too are transformed into the same glory.

This angel takes a position on earth that covers both the sea and the land, and in His hand is a book.

In light of what follows this is a picture of the Lord coming to establish His rule on Earth as the Scriptures have foretold.

The angel announced there would be no more delay. The time had come to bring all things to an end.

The mystery of God in v. 7 is that which has been hidden from the eyes of sinful man but declared by God to the prophets.

The Kingdom of God will now come and be established on Earth with no more delay.

8Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.”

9So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.”

And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

10Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. **11**And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

John is told to take the little open book from the angel’s hand and eat it.

It tastes sweet but turns bitter and gives him heartburn.

There has been much debate about what the book is.

I think it is this prophecy of John's – the Book of Revelation.

Here's why -

As the Revelation of Jesus, it’s sweet!

We see satan defeated.

We see the Kingdom of God finally come.

As a book of judgment, its hard to take.

Finally, John is told he would have to prophecy about more.

His visions are not over yet. There's more to come.

Indeed, John will now be given some visions of the future which don’t fit into the chronology the book has followed so far.

But that will have to wait for our next study.