

Revelation 9:1-21 Part 1

Revelation 9:1-21 1Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. 2He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. 3Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them. 7The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. 10They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. 11They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. 12The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things. 13Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind. 16The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. 18A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths. 19For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their

tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

20The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Exodus 23:28 Deut. 7:20 Joshua 24:12 Hornets

When I was 4 or 5, we were at "the lodge", a gorgeous 160 acre retreat in the aspens above Mono Lake, playing down by a little stream that runs down through the place, and I kicked over a hornets nest.

There were 4 or 5 of us kids, my brother was there, and we were all pretty little, and we didn't know what to do. We were just flailing around, screaming. My dad heard us, up on the porch 5 or 600 yards away, and he got to us instantly and scooped us up and ran!

In the old testament, God promised the children of Israel, He would fight for them. *I will send the hornet in front of you, and it will drive the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites away from you.*

Unspeakable terror is what God's enemies can expect.

This passage tonight is one of the most frightening in all of the Bible. Torment such that men seek the relief they think they will find in death, and death is prohibited to them.

Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay.

1Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

We've been very literal up to this point. If it said an astere fell to earth, we saw no reason to interpret it any other way than some object in space colliding with earth.

And even science generally agrees that the events described sound consistent with the different sized comets, meteors and asteroids that could impact earth.

But this is a different kind of star, and one that can be addressed by the pronoun "he". This star is a person. A being. Someone.

And so we go back into scripture to see if there are some parallels that we can learn from. And there are!

Isaiah 14 is a taunt against the king of Babylon. But midway the language changes and it is apparent that the taunt becomes about the spiritual force behind the king of babylon. This passage is universally ascribed to Satan beginning about vs. 12

12 *"How you have fallen from heaven,
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!"*

13 *"But you said in your heart,
'I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.*

14 *'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.'*

15 *"Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,
To the recesses of the pit.*

16 *"Those who see you will gaze at you,
They will ponder over you, saying,
'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,*

*17Who made the world like a wilderness
And overthrew its cities,
Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’*

Satan, star of the morning, son of the dawn, thrown down to the earth.

In Luke 10, the seventy, who were sent out to proclaim the gospel returned with joy and said; *“Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”* 18And He said to them, *“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.*

We're not going to torture those words into Barak o'Bama. I'll let you chase those rabbit trails on your own. Satan is cast out of heaven in those verses. And again in Revelation 12, we see the same;

Revelation 12:9 *The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

So this star is Satan. And he's hurled down to the earth, and it says; *and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.*

The first thing I want you to notice is the word given. Satan cannot release these demons from the pit until 'the key' was given to him. Sovereign God is in control of this pit. Even after the key is given to Satan to open it, Sovereign God is in control of all of these events.

The next thing we want to see is the word abyss. abbyssou in the greek.

What is the abyss? We believe it is a place that resulted from demons co-habiting with women in Genesis 6. Peter helps us out. This is obscure so hang in there.

1 Peter 3 starting at vs. 18 says; *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;19in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,20who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of*

Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

And it shows up again when Jesus is casting the demons out of people in the gospel's. Remember the Gerasene demoniac who had hundreds of demons. What did they ask Jesus? *Don't send us to the abyss.* It is a prison for demons.

So the abyss has been a prison for demons from the time of Noah until now. Presumably with other demons sent there at different times also.

Satan is thrown down to earth, and he has the key to that pit. That's bad.

2He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

We can picture a volcano. So much smoke and ash that the sun is covered up.

The sun and the air were darkened. Creepy, but that isn't anything yet. Remember in Mark 8:11 when the pharisees wanted to see signs in the sky?

The Pharisees followed Him and began to dispute with Him, asking Him for a sign in the sky, to make trial of Him.

That was because of Joel's prophecy that Peter quotes at pentecost; Acts 2:19 *And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:*

The pharisees were saying, if you're really the messiah, do some of this weirdness in the sky that we've read about in Joel and other places.

Well, here they are! And guess what, if those same pharisees were put back on earth to see these prophecies coming true, they still wouldn't believe.

3Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Ever been bitten by a scorpion? I have. I was sweeping metal shavings into a dustpan one day with a foxtail broom, and I didn't see a little scorpion mixed in. He was just a little bitty one. And when I swept him into the dustpan he stung one of my fingers.

Holy cow does that hurt. They've got some poison that really makes the pain miserable. I went on google to find out if I was going to die. I didn't.

So when it says these locusts have power like scorpions have power, it means they can inflict nauseating pain. Agonizing pain. Or as the doctors like to say, "you may experience some 'discomfort'."

We haven't seen anything like this agony that these locust - demons will inflict on men. Scorpions are just to get your mind going in the right direction. How about a swarm of scorpions, that can fly, that can inflict agony to the point you'd love to die, but you can't.

4They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5And they were not permitted to kill anyone,

Did you know God is sovereign king over demons from the pit of hell. They have to obey Him. They are constrained. These are obedient demons. Don't hurt the grass or the plants or the trees.

But but but I thought you said last week all the green grass was burnt up!!? It was. More grew.

Nor do they have permission to kill anyone. Even though Satan is a murderer and they'd probably love to kill everybody, sovereign God is in control.

Did you know demons could kill someone? Apparently they can. But only with permission. These cannot kill for 5 months.

Even when Satan requested to interfere with both Job and Peter, he had to have permission from Sovereign God, and he had to stay within prescribed limits.

Apparently we humans are the only thing in the universe that can thumb our nose at God Almighty and do as we please . . . for a time.

The almighty has been waiting, waiting, waiting for the time when that wrong will exact payment. These locust demons are what I have coming. This is what I deserve! But Jesus interceded for me

4They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

What think ye? As bad as this torment for 5 months sounds, will hell be a relief.

5 months of being shocked with a tazer, over and over and over, and you can't die, nothing to look forward to tomorrow but more shocks with a tazer, no relief no rest.

Is hell going to be an improvement?

I don't think so. I think this chapter is here for us to contemplate the plight of these folks and ask that question about hell. We don't like to think about hell. This torment is un-imaginable. Hell is worse. Put it out of your mind.

Maxine has been enduring horrible pain with shingles. She's got some meds to try to make it a little more comfortable. She warned folks last Sun. morning to get the pill that you take so you don't get shingles. Pam is in Reno. One of the things she's buying is that pill.

Maxine loved us enough to warn us to avoid shingles at all cost. Pam heeded that warning. When's the last time we warned anyone about avoiding hell. It's unfashionable to do that.

This torment for 5 months that John saw is real. Count on it. So is hell.

7The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. 8They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. 10They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

Clearly, John is at a loss to describe this plague. He says, "like" or "appeared to be" 10 times in those 4 verses.

Every generation has gotten to this description and gone on flights of fancy.

This is everything from B24 Liberators (their sting is in their tail) to helicopters to drones, to who knows what.

I'm going to take a different approach. The temptation is to salaciously tantalize your mind with sensational interpretations of what we have here. Come to the tent meeting and learn what these things really are!

Revelation is a great book to draw a crowd. Tantalize folks. Sensationalize what the future holds.

Allistair Begg may be an a-millennialist, but he's right about that. That's what the Jehovah witnesses do. They knock on your door and want to tell you all about Revelation and the future. They don't appeal to you spiritually. They can't. They don't believe in the Spirit. But they can appeal to your morbid curiosity about sensational prophecies.

Wanta know what I think these are??

I think they're demons from the pit of hell that look like horses prepared for battle, with golden crowns on their heads that have a face like a man's and hair like a woman's, and teeth like lions and breastplates of iron, and wings that make noise, and tails that sting like crazy.

Faces like men. These are intelligent beings.

I don't think they're locusts. Why? Because of verse 11.

11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Proverbs 30:27 says; *locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks;*

That's how I know these aren't just some wild kind of locust. These have a king. They advance in ranks like locusts, like horses in battle, but these have a king over them. Abaddon. Apollyon. They have a battle plan, and they advance in order.

12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.