

The Book of Revelation

By

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CHAPTER NINE

JUDGMENTS FROM THE PIT

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from Heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key to the bottomless pit" (vs. 1).

This is not a material star, as in chapter eight. **"To him"** was given the key. It is an angel. Satan was called "Lucifer" or day-star before his fall.

The Pit

The regions of the damned are as real as anything on the surface of this earth. Although scientists believe our earth to be a molten mass of material, this is no hindrance for spirit beings. Somewhere on the surface of this earth is the mouth of the bottomless pit. The angel comes to **"the earth."**

GOD has a program and events must await their course. This star may be Satan or some other fallen angel who, having received permission to open the pit, throws himself down with all possible speed, Or it may be one of GOD's angels who has the key to the pit, as in Chapter twenty.

Satan had to get permission to torment Job and when that was granted he used his power to the limit. So here the bottomless pit is opened to do its part in bringing tribulation upon this earth such as never was to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matthew 24:21).

Infernal Regions

When CHRIST met the demons at Gadara, they besought Him not to send them out into the deep; rather would they enter the bodies of swine. When CHRIST granted them permission, enough demons left that man to set two thousand hogs crazy.

The demons dread the abyss and shun it, knowing full well it is their future abode. Some besought CHRIST not to torment them before the time. When the unclean spirit goes out of a man it walks through dry places seeking rest but finds none (Luke 11:24).

This pit is a fearful prison of unruly spirits and has its lid somewhere on the surface of the earth.

At the Battle of Armageddon, an angel will chain Satan and cast him into this pit and close it up for one thousand years.

Satan, at present, has millions of fallen angels and demons to work his evil designs. But there is a dark and horrible pit, full of strange and evil beings, that is closed, to protect mankind from their fearful torments.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). This verse is not only true of the saved, but no doubt the unsaved as well, for who can imagine the fearful scenes that come before the eyes of an unsaved man as he passes into a Christless eternity.

Infernal Creatures

"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace" (vs. 2).

Many times a volcano has blown off a mountain cap, and has thrown ashes many miles into the air. But here is a volcano of another description. The lid flies off; a great black smoke belches forth. **"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"** (vs. 3).

When we think of eternal life, we think of something that will never end: we expect to be somewhere in a million years from now. But GOD was alive and active a million years in the past.

Spirits of Evil Men

In five thousand years from now, there will be a prison full of evil spirits. Once these spirits lived upon this earth. They ate and drank; they bought and sold. Some of them were our relatives, our neighbors and our friends. But earth's distinctions will have vanished then. No difference whether they rode in an auto or walked; lived in a cottage or a palace. They sinned away their day of grace and for ever they must suffer for the error of their way. And so five thousand years ago, and ten, and throughout eternity past, GOD has been at work.

Bound Agents of Evil

Once Satan sang and enjoyed the smile of his Creator as he led a multitude of angels in ceaseless joy to do His will. But a time came when Satan sinned and myriads of angels sinned with him. There are at this moment hosts of angels in **"everlasting chains under darkness"** because they **"kept not their first estate"** (Jude 6). The very air we breathe is peopled with demons who ever seek to possess a human body or in some other way to hinder a child of GOD.

Myriads of infernal creatures impatiently wait at the door of the Bottomless Pit, while in some distant age that has passed, four great generals of power with two hundred million infernal cavalry were chained and locked up in the river Euphrates.

And so as the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, the door of the pit swings open and a horde of locusts swarm out, the like of which men have never seen before.

Infernal Locusts

Regular locusts may lie dormant for seventeen years and come forth to bring destruction to vegetation. But here are locusts that have been locked up for ages, now turned loose with a commission to hurt no green thing but "**only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads**" (vs. 4).

These locusts are unearthly in shape and unnatural in disposition. They are shaped like horses, with faces of men, hair of women, teeth as lions and with breastplates of iron (vs. 7 to 9).

Turtles have protection of shell, but here the iron seems to signify that these creatures cannot be caught and destroyed. They dart about in darkness, do not eat but do delight to cause suffering. It is natural for the fallen mind to kill and delight to torture another. Hunters kill and shout for joy as the helpless little rabbit writhes in its last agonies of death. So here the fallen creatures of another age delight to see men suffer.

These creatures are called locusts, but they have little in common with earth's regular locusts. In Heaven the cherubim have four faces; one as a man, one as a lion, one as an eagle and one as an ox. So here, these seem to be sort of an infernal cherubim.

No doubt they once possessed greater intelligence, but having fallen from that high position, they have their "**understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God**" (Ephesians 4:18). When sin alienates a person from GOD, the understanding is darkened. An unsaved person cannot reason straight about spiritual matters. The things of the Spirit of GOD are foolishness to him, "**neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned**" (I Corinthians 2:14).

Torment

"And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months" (vs. 5).

What mercy to our present age that these creatures are locked up. And what torment the future holds in store for those who trifle with GOD's mercy. There is much suffering on earth now, but much evil is held in check. The HOLY SPIRIT is hindering the mystery of iniquity (II Thessalonians); these infernal locusts are locked in the abyss; and two hundred million horsemen are bound and helpless.

But one day these creatures of sorrow will be turned loose upon mankind and men will writhe in pain and agony. Think of an eternal hell together with all of these creatures as companions. And yet men build on the very edge of hell and boast of their great wisdom.

No Suicide

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and

death shall flee from them" (vs .6).

Now medical science works for healing as life's greatest blessing. Men spurn the electric chair and feign would live forever. But a time is not far future when men will welcome death and court disaster.

Just what would happen if a man were to hold a shot gun to his head, or sink himself in a lake, we do not know. Suicide will not bring relief, for death shall flee from them and they "**shall not find it.**" It may be that these creatures will be able in some way to prevent suicide as part of their torment.

This is a mere taste of what it would mean if GOD had not set a watch at the tree of life. For had man eaten of that tree and have lived forever in a mortal body; a body reeking with disease and cancer, what horrors no man can even imagine.

It is only when redeemed men receive an immortal body; a body pulsating with eternal life; a body that will never feel a pain nor heave a sigh. It is only in that body that men will have right to the tree of life and live forever.

The wings of ordinary locusts have the sound of whirring machinery. I was one time in a woods and hearing the sound I went in search of the machine until I passed a tree and heard the sound behind me. But the sound of these wings are "**as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle**" (vs. 9).

"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" (vs. 11).

When Satan fell he led a multitude of angels with him, so here is another mighty prince who is king of this host of evil; a prince who no doubt one day led in rebellion against his GOD.

Our Clue Again

"One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter" (vs. 12).

Let us remember our clue to the understanding of the book of Revelation. A man buys a farm in July but cannot come into possession until April first. It is a large farm and he will need several men to work for him, so at various times during these months he hires men to begin work on April first.

CHRIST purchased the earth over nineteen hundred years ago but will not take possession until the Day of Redemption. During this nineteen hundred years He has been "hiring" people to become kings and priests to reign with Him on the earth when He takes possession.

Chapters two and three are taken up with messages to the churches. It is instructions to those who will help Him rule at that time. On April first, He will find Satan in control and Satan will contest His every right to the earth. CHRIST will then take steps to oust this intruder.

Chapter four is the court scene. In chapter five, CHRIST takes the title deed, and in chapter six He opens the seals. Since the issue is in the human heart, CHRIST puts on the judgments with care so as to turn men to Himself.

The last seal is broken in chapter eight. The book is now open and fierce judgments are soon to fall upon earth dwellers. These take the form of trumpet judgments. The last three are "woe" trumpets and bring great suffering and sorrow. The first opens the bottomless pit and brings terrible locusts upon the earth.

Outraged Mercy

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God" (vs. 13).

The location of the cry locates the sin. For ages, these horns have been united in a cry to GOD for mercy toward sinful men. On the day of atonement they upheld the blood. But now mercy is exhausted and even these horns are crying out for vengeance.

Abel's blood cried unto GOD from the ground. So here, men have been praying and acting saved; belonging to church and daring to call themselves by the name of GOD, but they have so outraged GOD by their conduct that the four horns turn from mercy to vengeance for the evil doers.

The Four Angels

"Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" (vs. 14).

These are evil angels, for good angels would not be bound, neither would they hurt mankind if they were turned loose. Little can the human race know the realities of the infernal regions. Here are four great generals with all their hosts, tearing at their chains; intelligent creatures writhing in agony, trying to free themselves in order to torment mankind.

They were no doubt bound in some proceeding age, and are kept bound in mercy to man. Satan will be bound for one thousand years. Imagine people living during that time; they will know of him only as we know of these, merely hearsay.

There may be many angels that are bound but here are four of a certain class capable of doing certain things at this time.

The Euphrates River is near where Satan first entered human history and where the tower of Babel was built. It is Satan's center of operation.

Four Infernal Captains

"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" (vs. 15).

Here are particular angels, of a particular class, in a particular position; turned loose for a particular time to slay one-third of mankind.

For five months, while the locusts held sway, men desired to die but could not do so. Here under this trumpet they get their fill of death, as one out of three fall victim to these creatures.

"And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand" (vs. 16).

Here is an enormous host. No such army has ever been mustered. Two hundred million infernal cavalry with **"them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and 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"** (vs. 17).

No doubt both the writer and reader of these lines have friends who will some time suffer these torments, being subject any moment to be horrified, stung, stifled and scorched by the very elements of hell; the fire, and the smoke and the brimstone.

Imagine the physicians and the hospitals working overtime; the undertakers unable to care for the dead; the long lists in every newspaper. One out of a family in Egypt died and the cry rang throughout the land but here, one out of three are struck down.

There are some two billion people on earth today. One-third of that number would bring in a time of anguish that only those who feel it can fully know. Five times the population of the United States will fall during this brief period of time.

Refused Warning

But if the one-third are killed, it will give due warning to the two-thirds to listen to the servants of the Lord and repent, but alas, **"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... neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts"** (vs. 20, 21).

The World Waxes Worse

This is a time of abounding iniquity. But not all at once does it become thus. The let down in morals is gradual. First, just men smoked cigarettes; then great billboards pictured women enjoying the smoke; later she had her preference and now she openly smokes in public.

So here, the characteristic of the age has been a general let down in morals. Men were becoming more selfish, covetous, boasters, blasphemers, unthankful, unholy, fierce, heady, highminded and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of GOD (II Timothy 3), until now it has become a part of their very life. As the days of Noah, so will be the days of CHRIST's return.

Some tell us that after men have suffered in hell, they will repent and all be saved. But here,

under the most terrible pressure, they repent not. They murder and are not sorry. They may weep when arrested but they are not sorry they committed the crime, just sorry they got caught.

No More Marriage

There is a hint here that marriage is done away. Fornication is the act of the unmarried as adultery is the act of the married. In our present time of fearful morals in schools and colleges; in our time when men and women can live together like cats and dogs and call it companionate marriage; when divorce is easy and remarriage is in good standing. In such a time as this, it is only a step to discarding the sacred institution of marriage altogether.

There are also "**thefts**." Our day abounds in dishonesty, deceit and theft. There must be pure food laws to protect our health; government inspection at the slaughter house, and men to test the scales and measures in every store lest our purchase be cut short.

Verily, how blind are those who comfort their hearts by saying the world is getting better.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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