

Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 4:36 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 9

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places! Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm!" (Ephesians 6:12)

Remember what happened in Revelation 8 (our last lesson) when John saw, in a vision, the Lord (the resurrected "Lamb") opening the seventh seal? There was an awesome silence in heaven, for about a half hour, as John saw "the seven angels who stand before God given the seven trumpets," which contained all the remaining judgments of the Tribulation period, including seven trumpet judgments, followed by seven "bowl judgments," with each judgment progressively more devastating!

But before the angel could sound the first trumpet, another angel, came and stood at the altar of incense, holding a golden censer, representing the prayers of all the saints and, at the command of the Lord, threw them down to the earth, resulting in peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake"!

Then the first four trumpets sounded, in succession, and there resulted what MacArthur described as "divine destruction of the earth's ecology"! There was hail and fire and a great star falling from heaven, with a third of the earth burned, and a third of the sea becoming blood, and a third of the rivers and springs made bitter, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars darkened! And our lesson ended with John seeing an eagle "flying in the midheaven...saying 'woe, woe, woe' to those who dwelled on the earth"! In anticipation of the three trumpet blasts about to sound!

And that sets the scene for last night's lesson!

Revelation 9:1 says, "Then the fifth angel sounded" (the fifth trumpet, and first of three "woes"), and John saw "a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth, and a key to the bottomless was given to him"! Two earlier references to stars falling from heaven appear to represent actual stars, or fragments of them (perhaps meteors or comets), falling as a form of divine judgment on the earth. But this one seems to refer to a person and "he's" given the key to the bottomless pit! Walvoord says it appears referring to none other than Satan himself as an aftermath of the warfare in heaven mentioned in Revelation 12:7-9.

Jesus said, in Luke 10:18, that He saw Satan falling "like lightning from heaven," and Isaiah 14:12 says, "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!"

Revelation 9:2-6 says that "he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace...then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power...and they were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree (which normal locusts destroy!) but only the men

who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads! And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment them for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man! And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them!" Wow!

But there's more about the "locusts" (in verses 7-12)! They look like "horses prepared for battle," and had "crowns like gold" on their heads, and "faces like men," and hair like the hair of women, and teeth like the teeth of lions, and "breastplates of iron," and the sound of chariots on their wings, and "tails like scorpions," and they have "a king over them, the angel of the abyss," whose name is "destruction"!

John Neal described them as "the strangest locusts ever seen"! But they're obviously not real locusts like the kind of locusts that God sent as plagues to strip the land of Egypt during the time of Moses and the great "exodus" (recorded in Exodus 10)! These were "locusts" from Hell, not insects from the earth! Walvoord wrote that, as evidenced by their description, they're actually "hordes of demons which will be unleashed upon the earth," as the judgment of the fifth trumpet of the Tribulation! Allowing a degree of demonic and satanic oppression the world has never experienced! (Henry Morris observed, maybe tongue in cheek, that "God will allow unbelievers during the tribulation to experience a little fellowship with demons, their future co-inhabitants in the lake of fire"!)

Revelation 9:13 says, "Then the sixth angel sounded (the sixth trumpet, and second "woe"), and John heard a voice from the four horns of golden altar which is before God...saying to release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates. And the four angels who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind!" Wow!

These are four "fallen" (and "bound") angels positioned, strategically, at the Euphrates River (near where the Garden of Eden and Tower of Babel, and Babylonian Empire were located in close proximity to Israel!) whom God will use to fulfill the sixth trumpet judgment! Prepared and ready to be released at a specific time in accordance with His sovereign plan!

Again the figurative language that John uses (in Revelation 9:16-19), to describe the vast "armies of the horsemen," with riders having "breastplates the colors of fire and brimstone," and the "heads of horses like the heads of lions...and out of their mouths proceeding fire and smoke and brimstone," a force that will be used to make war with the world's inhabitants and kill one-third of humanity seems to suggest a demonic force never before unleashed in the annals of time!

Willmington (in his Guide to the Bible) wrote that Revelation 9, which "records John's vision of the fifth and sixth trumpets (and the first two of three "woes"), may be the most revealing text in all the Bible concerning the subject of demonology"! Walvoord notes that the tribulation period unmasks not only human evil but the true character of Satan! In our day, while Satan is restricted, it's easy to overlook the great conflict which is raging between the forces of God and the forces of Satan! But in the great tribulation, and especially with the release of the confined demons (and fallen "bound" angels), Satan will be exposed for all he represents!

What is hard to grasp is the response from the people who will be left in the world during these times! Revelation 9:20-21 says that "the 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; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts!"

Interestingly, as a closing thought, Willmington notes that man's attitude towards spiritual warfare and a demonic world in our day (and in the tribulation period to come) may be likened to man's attitude in the dark ages toward germs and bacteria! When the bubonic plague was at its height in 1666 people believed the fresh air was the culprit and so sealed themselves from it to make themselves, they thought, immune to the plague. When told that the plague was caused by germs and microscopic organisms spread by fleas, they laughed them to scorn!

Some people today have adopted a similar attitude toward Satan and a demonic world! When told that the world is in the grip of Satan and his countless host of invisible and intelligent demons and that one day the bottomless pit will be opened and that our world will be invaded by a virus far more dreadful than the bubonic plague (or modern-day corona virus) that will direct its attack against the soul rather than the body, they laugh! But that's where we're headed according to the Bible!

This lesson gives new meaning to Ephesians 6:12!

Read it again and stand firm!

Lowell