

## THE DEFIANT ONES – Revelation 9

Last week we looked at **four** of the **seven** trumpets of God's *divine* judgement. In Revelation **chapter nine** we have the **fifth** and **sixth** trumpets being blown. Our subject today has to do with **torment in the great tribulation, the result of mankind's defiance**. This chapter is *testament* to the fact that defiance against God is a dead-end street; compliance, *a life surrendered to His will*, is the only path to **abundant/everlasting life!**

In verses 1-12, **the fifth trumpet**, we see an **Army Rising From The Pit** (v.1) The "**fallen star**" is a person. This person is *believed* to be **satan** – Jesus declared in **Luke 10:18** "***I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven.***" The tense of the Greek verb for **fallen** *here*, tells us that the **star** had **already fallen** from heaven.

***A key to the bottomless pit is given to satan (fallen star).*** His brilliance *ended* when he desired to be **like God!** (**Isaiah 14:14-15**) "***I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.***" Yet you shall be brought **down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.** **Notice:** the devil **does not** have **complete** authority *here*, or at any time; **permission is granted** him in *accordance* with God's **wrath!** The "**bottomless pit**": **literally - "pit of the abyss."** Jesus mentioned this place when He spoke to the demons *that possessed a man*, in **Luke 8.**

**(Luke 8:30-32) Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.**

**(v.2-6)** The judgement here is not environmental, as with the *previous* trumpet judgements, but is focused upon the inhabitants of the earth! **Note:** **the eighth plague of Egypt was a plague regarding locusts (Exodus 10:1-20).** Here, smoke rises from the pit, *darkening the sky and the sun*. Out of the smoke comes forth **locust-like creatures**. These are believed to be demonic, because they *arise* from the abyss. **They are given power to strike (sting) those who do not have the seal of God!**

In **chapter 7**, *144,000 Jewish men*, from the twelve tribes of Israel, will have the seal of God placed upon their foreheads, for God's divine purpose. *However*, there will be others, both Jews and Gentiles who will also have the seal of God! Scripture declares all who place their *faith* in Christ are sealed by the **Holy Spirit of promise!** **Ephesians 1:13.**

This torment will continue for five months, the normal *life span* of locusts. In **(v.5, 6) The symptoms of their torment are like that of a scorpion sting.** In extreme cases a scorpion bite can cause *burning pain and swelling, a generalized itching, lip and facial swelling, it can also cause the tongue and larynx (voice box) to swell; and constricted breathing.* **People will want to die but will not – with suicide as their only option, *apart from turning to Christ!***

**(Read: v.7-11)** Here John describes these hideous insects. As we consider John's description of these creatures, let us heed the cautious words of Biblical scholar and commentator, **Warren Wiersbe: "It is unnecessary to try to 'spiritualize' these symbols, or to interpret them in light of modern means of warfare. John is (simply) heaping image upon image to force us to feel the horror of this judgment."** **Warren Wiersbe** These demonic creatures *seem* to resemble a cross between a locust and a horse **(v.7, 8).**

They have faces similar to that of men, *not a man's actual face*, with crowns of gold on their heads (v.7b) – *something resembling crowns, encircling their heads, with the brilliance of gold.* (Barnes' Notes Commentary). **John points out that the devil is their king!** Confirmed by his name in Hebrew and Greek (v.11) **Hebrew: Abaddon – in Greek Apollyon; both meaning: *destruction or destroyer*.** A fitting description for the ruler of *darkness and torment*. (Read: v.12).

In (v.13-19) we have the sixth trumpet, which *reveals* yet another army! (v.13-14). A voice is heard coming from the “four corners” of the “golden altar of incense” (Revelation 8:3-5). **In the temple, on the corners of the altar of “incense” and “burnt offerings” horns were placed - Exodus 27:2; 30:2;** horns represent *strength, honor, power, dominion, glory* (Deuteronomy 33:17; Lamentations 2:3; Daniel 8:5, 9). On the “Day of Atonement,” blood from the sacrificed animal would be placed on each horn – **Exodus 29:12; 30:10.**

This is *significant*, because Christ, *after His resurrection*, ascended into heaven to offer His own blood on the altar before God, for our everlasting atonement! **Thus, He is the only one with authority to speak from the four corners of the altar! The voice, here, must be that of Christ. (Hebrews 9:12) **Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.****

However, in the tribulation period, the voice coming from the *altar* is one of judgement, rather than grace!

(v.14b) These “four angels,” are demonic beings, because they are “bound” – fallen angels, who followed Lucifer in his revolt against God - **Isaiah 14:12-14.** They are released from the Great River Euphrates. *Historically, this region has been a place of major spiritual/social conflict.* Perhaps because it's the place of mankind's fall! The Euphrates River was one of the *main*

*tributaries* (water sources) flowing through the **Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14)**. These **four** angels are released to do what God now restrains **satan from doing**. Presently, we live in the age of grace, but after the church has been raptured, all hell will *literally* break loose.

**(Read: v.15)** God's judgement is precise, for a certain *hour, day, month, and year*. **A third of mankind is killed**. *For this they have been prepared (v.15a)*. With a fourth of mankind having already been killed, **(Revelation 6:8 – fourth seal)**, a third being killed here represents the fact that half the world's population is dead by the **sixth trumpet judgement!** A third will die as the result of an invasion by a **two-hundred-million-man army, (v.16)**. An army fueled by the *power* of the devil and the carnal reasoning of mankind. **Yet, in their ignorance, they are carrying out God's judicial will, just as the Assyrians/Babylonians did in ancient Israel.**

In (v.17-19) John describes the horsemen and horses (v.17-19). Keeping *commentator Warren Wiersbe's cautious warning* in mind, it is quite *possible* that John is describing here *modern-day global warfare*. The *fire, smoke, and brimstone* are a *good depiction* of modern-day munitions being fired. **(Read: v.18, 19) - In WWI an estimated 40 million people perished; in WWII an estimated 70-85 million people died.** The plague of *fire, smoke, and brimstone* describes destruction on a world-wide scale, which the world has never seen before! **(Read: v.20, 21).**

**As with 9/11, after all of this, rather than turn to God, mankind remains defiant!** They refused to cease worshipping demons, and the idols of their *hands!* Even today in our society, satanism is on the rise. It is no longer hidden. In the Great Tribulation satan will be openly accepted and worshipped! <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6616577/The-rise-Satanism-America-members-dont-ACTUALLY-worship-devil-push-activism.html>

Because they worship that which cannot *see, hear or walk, murder, sorceries, sexual immorality, and thefts, abound! (v.21). Murder - Since Cain slew Able mankind has been killing his fellow man. In 2017 Mexico reported 29,000 murders; in the same year there were 17,284 murders in the U.S.; from 2016-17 Colorado Springs experienced a 53% increase in murders. (krdo.com). Love conquers hate! Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than to lay his life down for his friend." (John 15:13). But the tribulation attests to the fact that mankind will still be more willing to lay down the lives of others!*

**They refused to repent of their Sorceries –pharmakeus (pharmacy): drugs; also, sorcerer (one who uses magical remedies), divination, witchcraft, astrology. The California psychic hotline is a *hotline* to hell! *Telling people what they want to hear, not what they need to hear!* The opioid epidemic facing us today is further *evidence* that we cannot heal ourselves! **In the tribulation mankind is found still trying to heal himself!****

**They will not repent of Sexual immorality – porneia: illicit sexual intercourse (including incest, homosexuality, lesbianism and bestiality); all a form of idolatry. Illicit *sexual behavior* has become the new religion of our day. *To speak out against it is to be immediately ostracized as a social pariah (outcast). "Love" has been reclassified by our carnal human propensities!* And whoever disagrees is "close-minded" and "hateful!" But no reclassification of a lie makes it the truth! **God loves us too much to endorse that which separates us from Him and sends us to an eternal hell!****

**The last thing mankind will refuse to repent of is Thefts – The devil is a thief and a liar! He exists to *steal, kill, and destroy.* Thievery holds the promise of a good life! **In the Tribulation, mankind will still believe in that delusional lie, which states, "He who has the most stuff at the end of life wins!"** But Jesus**

asked, (Mark 8:36) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Defiance only produces more murder, sorceries, sexual immorality, and thefts! It is a sure path to torment! (Ephesians 5:5-7) For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. The good news is Jesus died for us, that every sin we once clung to might be erased by His blood!

God loves the *murderer*, the *sexually immoral*, the *addict/sorcerer*, and the *thief*! But He must judge their sins! (Romans 5:8, 9) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

CONCLUSION: The path of defiance, or deliverance. One leads to torment, the other to triumph in Christ! (Colossians 1:13-14) He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.