

**Revelation 9:1-21**  
**“At war with the world”**

**I. Intro**

**II. Vs. 1-12 The army from the pit**

**III. Vs. 13-19 The army from the east**

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**I. Intro**

In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter at the first four trumpets and the resulting judgment was focused upon what humanity worshiped, the environment. The final verse of that chapter an angel proclaimed that the final three trumpet blasts were far worse than what the world had just gone through. The reason for this appears to be to give opportunity for unrepentant humanity time to realize their sin and instead of fleeing the wrath of the Lamb, come to His throne of mercy and grace.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter we are *somewhere past the midway point of the Great tribulation* in a period of time that Jesus spoke about in Matt. 24:20-22 when He said, “*Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*” John sees **two armies that will come upon the world:**

- Vs. 1-12 *The first is from the bottomless pit*
- Vs. 13-19 *The second is from the East*

As disturbing as these verses are, the worst part of them is not God’s judgment, but rather the unrepentant human heart of verses 20-21. The truth is that without the God’s grace we would be as hard hearted! *The fallen human heart or the redeemed heart that is still in bondage to the flesh will always chose sin over grace!*

**II. Vs. 1-12 The army from the pit**

Vs. 1-2 John reveals in these first two verses the reason for the first woe of 8:13. Look at verse 1 carefully and you will notice two things concerning this “fallen star”:

- a. Though John sees a fallen star he uses the personal pronoun “*him*” as it relates to the receiving the key. That tells us that **the star is a person and not an object.**
- b. Second, as the key to the bottomless pit **is given to him** we know that **the scope of his authority is limited.**

As to his identification there are several clues that may point to who this “fallen star” is:

1. Luke 10: 18 Jesus said, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*” Furthermore, in light of this army Jesus in the next two verses declared, “*Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*”
2. Isa. 14:12-17 We are first told of this fall “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; 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. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?'”

The pit is first mentioned in Jesus' words to the demon named legion in Luke 8:31 where legion "begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss." We know that **this place is so horrible that the demons fear it.** It is interesting that we are told in 1 Peter 3:19-20 that Jesus "He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah". Rev 20:2-3 tells us that this is where satan will be kept during the 1,000-year reign of Christ upon the earth. Upon opening the bottomless pit so much smoke comes up that it pollutes the earth's atmosphere to where the sun is darkened.

Vs. 3-6 John declares **three things about this army from the bottomless pit:**

- a. **General characteristics:** They are called "locusts", yet they have the power of scorpions. Proverbs 30:27 tells us that "***locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks***". Clearly these "locusts" in verse 11 have a king whose name is "*in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon*", **in English is the destroyer or satan.** They don't resemble locusts in their description of 7-9 and neither do they have an appetite for the things that locusts do. Based upon this I come to the opinion that these creatures are ***not literal locusts but have swarming characteristics as locusts do and are very demonic.***
- b. **Intended victims:** Vs. 4 "*only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*" Who are those who have the seal of God on their foreheads?
  1. Rev. 7:4, 14:1-5 **The 144,000 Jewish believers who God seals.**
  2. **Any person alive who has trusted in Jesus during this time** as Eph. 1:13 remind us that "*having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*".

- c. **Effects of their attack:** It is important to realize that they have NO power to kill only torment for five months. *The normal life span of a locust is five months so their ability to attack is limited to their time frame.* Their torment is said to be like that of a scorpion, **so painful that the person who is so struck will desire death but be unable to obtain it.** The question remains as to what could possibly be so painful yet disabling? One possibility is **demonic possession** as we look at the stories of this in the scriptures we see folks who are in extreme pain yet unable to control their bodies, (Mark 4:5, (9:18).

Vs. 7-12 We are given their description, but it is done in figurative language as we note the use of the word “like” repeated 8 times in 4 verses. Any attempt to identify modern armies or their weaponry based upon John’s words would be pure speculation. John uses words meant to describe a terrifying demonic army who is led by one whose name is destroyer and has the power to hurt for five months. **This description reveals six things about this demonic army:**

1. Vs. 7a “*like horses prepared for battle.*” **They move efficiently and swiftly!**
2. Vs. 7b-8 “*On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.*” **There is a splendor about them that projects there, power and yet they are recognizable** as well (faces of men, long hair, and sharp teeth).
3. Vs. 9a “*And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron.*” **They wear armor that makes them impossible to destroy.**
4. Vs. 9b “*the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.*” The sound of their movement causes terror.
5. Vs. Vs. 10a “*They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails.*” **The damage they inflict is from the back of them and not the front.**

6. Vs. 11 “*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.*” **They are under direct commandment of the destroyer satan.**

With this the proclamation is made that one of the three woes is past.

### III. Vs. 13-19 The army from the east

Vs. 13-15a The 6<sup>th</sup> angel sounds his trumpet, and we note of the location in which this takes place as he is around the golden altar of incense which we saw is mixed with the prayers of the saints. They cry of their hearts was found 6:10 “*How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*” **It appears that the location of the 6<sup>th</sup> angel is the answer to the cry of their heart as God is ready to judge.**

Note the fact that we are told that these four angels are “*bound and been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.*” This speak to me that these are demonic as no angel of the Lord would need to be bound, also the fact that they are released shows that they are given authority! ***They come from the area of the river Euphrates that is both the cradle of mankind as well as the birthplace of all false worship not to mention the border of Israel.***

Vs. 15b-19 In these verses we are given **three things about this army:**

- Their purpose
- How they accomplish their purpose
- The description of the instruments they will employ to accomplish their purpose

1. **Their purpose** Vs. 15 “*to kill a third of mankind.*” In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter at the time of the 4<sup>th</sup> seal we were told that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the world’s population will be destroyed. Currently there is around 8 billion people upon the earth & if  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the world’s population were to die it would mean 2

billion people would die leaving around 6 billion people. Here we are told that another 1/3 of those will die at this time which would mean 2 billion of the original 8 billion or 1/4 of the original world's population would be no more.

2. **How they accomplish their purpose** Vs. 16 *“the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.”* An army of horsemen 200 million strong is the manner in which 1/3 will become dead. Some have noted that China has announced that their army is two million strong and are from the East, but this would still be speculation to insist this.

3. **The description of the instruments they will employ to accomplish their purpose** Vs. 18-19 First John reveals that they are deadly from the front as well as the back. We see that no one will be able to withstand their force and perhaps will be more prone to join them than fight them. Their weapons *“fire smoke and brimstone”* are all weapons of hell as earth will become hell during this part of the tribulation. *Perhaps God allows this to show unrepented humanity what they have chosen when they rejected the Son of Love as to give them time to repent before eternity!*

#### **IV. Vs. 20-21 The world's reaction**

Vs. 20-21 Our God is a merciful God, and it is according to Romans 2:4 *“the goodness of God leads you to repentance”*. The goodness of God is seen in that only 1/3 of the world's population will experience these armies though clearly 2/3 of the unrepented humanity deserve them. He does so not because some are better but rather He desires mercy. Amazingly the response to those who survive because of His mercy even in their grief and despair is still to refuse to turn from their sin and receive life everlasting. Even in hell mankind will not be sorry for their sins as the Bible describes weeping and wailing but it also describes the gnashing of teeth which is a sign of anger and hatred.

We are given a very vivid description of life on this planet during the tribulation period as we are told that will be “*worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, they will be committing murders involved in sorceries (drug abuse), sexual immorality and thefts.*” The world wants total freedom without restraint and that is what the world will have total anarchy with no morality free to do whatever they want to each other without any restrictions or law and the outcome is hell on earth.