

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #21
12/13/2006

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath Chapter Nine The First "Woe Judgment"

Mid-Point of Tribulation Period

The "Woe Judgments," or The Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Trumpet Judgments

Most Bible scholars holding to the Pre-Millennial viewpoint of eschatology see the "**Woe Judgments**" as the beginning of the last 3-1/2 years of the **Tribulation Period**. This is likely because the intensity and severity of the judgments increase dramatically with these judgments, the blowing of the fifth, sixth and seventh trumpets. This would be harmonious with the description Jesus gave in His Mt. Olivet discourse such as we find in Matthew 24:15-21.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Matthew 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Matthew 24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

Matthew 24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

Matthew 24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

Matthew 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

It is clear from the statements of our Lord that a change takes place during the **Tribulation Period** and since the introduction of these "**Woe Judgments**" signifies such a change it would not be contrary to the scriptural evidence to conclude that these judgments introduce the second half of the seven-year **Tribulation Period**. There are other events yet to be studied which will happen about the same time as these judgments such as the killing of the "**two witnesses**" and the descriptive appearance of Anti-Christ in chapter thirteen. Among other passages pertaining to the revealing of Anti-Christ and the division of the Tribulation Period which we will consider in a future lesson are 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and Daniel, chapters seven and nine.

As we come to the ninth chapter, the first "**Woe Judgment**," we immediately notice a significant change. **First**, whereas the previous judgments have been addressed towards the physical earth and affected man only indirectly, as a result of the impact on nature, these new judgments will be directed at Christ-rejecting mankind. The impact upon man will be much more direct and severe than what it has been in the first half of the Tribulation Period. **Second**, Satan, and his representative on earth, the Anti-Christ, who has not been in the forefront of the events during the three and one half years, will be focused on more during the last three and one half years. **Third**, the judgments of God upon the wicked will be seen to much more direct and personal during this portion of the **Tribulation Period**.

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Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

John says he **"saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth."**

As we consider this statement we need to clarify and focus on a couple of things. **First**, this **"star"** needs to be seen as a person, an angel, and not a meteor or other object falling from the sky such as was the case in 6:13. In the Old Testament angels were sometimes referred to as **"stars"** such as we find in Job 38:7 and Satan desired to be elevated **"above the stars of God"** (Isaiah 14:13). **Second**, the word **"fall"** in verse one is in the perfect tense which indicates an action completed in the past with the effect of that action continuing. Therefore, what John saw was a "star that had previously fallen to the earth." This would be harmonious with what Jesus said in Luke 10:18, **"...I beheld (imperfect tense or action in the past) Satan fall (a onetime event) from heaven."** Considering these factors a better translation of what John wrote would be *"I saw an angel that had fallen sometime in the past from heaven."*

To better understand Satan's banishment from heaven to earth please read Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Satan's banishment to the earth apparently did not preclude him from some access to God as can be seen from Job chapter one. Men have long struggled to fully understand and explain all that is associated with Satan's banishment to the earth and his apparent access to God and surely there are many questions relating to this that will have to remain unanswered for us. Another passage that we will study shortly is Revelation 12 which will provide us some more information on this subject. At this time we will leave this subject knowing that we will consider it more when we get to chapter twelve.

"To him was given the key of the bottomless pit." A **"key"** given to Satan indicates that God gave him the authority to do something that had previously been denied him. He was going to open the **"bottomless pit"** and release some very strange beings who were given a specific assignment determined by God.

What is this **"bottomless pit?"** The Greek word for **"bottomless"** is **abusso** (12) appears only two places outside of the book of Revelation, in Romans 10:7 where it refers to Christ descending to **"the deep,"** or where He went to set the prisoners free; and in Luke 8:31 where the demons, who had inhabited the Gadarene demoniac that Jesus healed, pleaded with Jesus not to send them into **"the deep."** God has created a very deep pit somewhere deep within the earth that serves as a temporary abode of the dead and as a prison for certain demons or fallen angels where they are held until the final judgment. In 2 Peter 2:4 we read **"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."** Again in Jude 6 we read about **"...the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."** These two passages tell us that some of the fallen angels, or demons, are so vile and vicious that God confined them in this prison where they have had no access to man while they await their final sentence to the **"lake of fire and brimstone"** which we will study in Revelation 20. Within that **"deep"** or **abyss** is a section reserved for these horrific beings. In 2 Peter 2:4 this place is called **"hell,"** but in the Greek the word is **tartaroo** (5020) and is used only in this verse. Wherever this **"bottomless pit"** is located in the depths of our earth it is so constructed

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that the confined demons are not able to escape from it, at least until God allows Satan to free them to fulfill His purpose of punishing and tormenting those who have rejected Him. That time has now come and these demonic beings are to be released to be used by God in bringing a degree of pain and torment upon men that has not previously been known on this earth.

"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." When Satan opens the pit great billows of smoke erupt and cover the whole earth in a suffocating cloud. No pollution that man has ever caused has had such an affect upon the environment. Those God-rejecting evolutionists and environmentalists are once again confounded by the Creator. In an instant He does what they cannot undo or correct. They can only suffer the effects of a previously unknown pollution of the air. This, that God has protected the earth from before, He now pours out as a part of His judgment upon those who have denied Him. It is so overwhelming that the light of the sun is hid and the whole sky is darkened.

"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." The billowing clouds of **"smoke"** is associated with judgment and the **"smoke"** contains something fearful and strange for which there is no known name. These creatures are not locusts nor scorpions, but are compared to the scorpions because of their vicious stings containing poison that produces agonizing pain. They have never been known of before and there is no earthly name for them. Scorpions are among the most feared insects upon the earth. Various forms on our earth are known to man, the most poisonous being found in Asia, with poison sufficiently powerful that it can even kill small children. Some interpreters have identified these **"locusts"** with the insects that inflict great damage on vegetation, but they are only like a cloud of **"locusts"** because they don't act like **"locusts"** and eat vegetation.

God's assignment for them is both pointed and restrictive. **"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man."**

Unlike **"locusts"** they are not to eat any vegetation. Their only purpose is to inflict pain upon those who have rejected Christ Jesus. Even in that assignment there is another restriction. They are to inflict pain, but cannot kill and they are to inflict their horrendous pain for five months.

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months."

Down through the ages God has poured out His grace, His kindness and mercy upon men, trying to persuade them to trust Him and recognize Him as their God. But most men have become so used to enjoying

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the blessings of God that they have come to think they deserve them. About the only thing that men receive that they don't think they deserve are really what they do deserve, the times of adversity, trouble and pain because that is what sin produces. In Romans 2:4-6 God's Word says, **"...despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds"**

Sometimes, when men reject God's grace and kindness, they will turn to Him when they experience adversity. Is it possible that such a time of pain which is described here could cause wicked men to turn to God and beg Him for mercy and grace? They are going to experience pain unlike anything they have ever known. Will they be provoked into turning to God? No! They are beyond hope and only try to escape the pain by trying to end their lives, but God will not allow them to kill themselves. **"Death flees them,"** and so their pain produces no repentance (9:20-21). 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 even tells us that those who **"... received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."** It certainly appears clear that those who enter the Tribulation Period after having rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ will not be persuaded by any means to repent and trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior because their hearts have become too hard and are too resistant to God.

From the description of these strange and different creatures it is clear that they are demonic beings. They can only be described by comparing them to horses, lions, scorpions and locusts, but even then the comparisons can only be made to what these creatures can do in running, flying, stinging and inflicting pain. There is no defense against them and no escaping them. It is a judgment only God could administer and yet, the victims of the judgment still do not recognize that it is God Who is in charge.

One other characteristic distinguishes these strange demonic beings. They have a king whom they serve. **"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."** He has an appropriate name. This seems to be another name for Satan. It certainly describes his nature and activity. He cannot create anything, but he can and does destroy what God has created.

Finally, the unthinkable and almost indescribable period of judgment of the first of the "Woe Judgments" comes to a close, **"One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter."** At the beginning of the lesson we pointed out that the severity of judgment was about to increase. It has, but it will get even worse. There are two more **"Woe Judgments"** still to come.