

## The Abyss Unlocked

The Trumpets of Seven Archangels – Part III

Revelation 9

### Introduction

Every year, hundreds of new books are published dealing with demonism, witchcraft, magic, spiritism and ghosts. Every new television season brings new programs and documentaries on astrology, fortune telling, divination and the paranormal.<sup>1</sup>

Channeling is now prime time. Communicating with the dead through spiritists is now main stream.

Just google the word “demon” and you will find over seventy million websites to surf. It does not matter if a person is Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, or into Native American fire worship, demons have infiltrated the thinking of the human race.

To make this even more convenient, according to those who say they are in touch with “angels” – good or fallen does not really matter – these beings can quote from the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Koran, and the Kabbalah.

This growing fascination just sort of gushes over the way spirit guides are here to help mankind reach its fullest potential.

It is interesting that the growing following of spirit guides – who, by the way, deny the Bible, the deity of Jesus Christ, the primacy of the cross, and the sinfulness of mankind – are adamant that their guides are providing wisdom and truth about the other world beyond. They fail to heed the warning of scripture that Satan masquerades as an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14), delivering a different gospel than the gospel of Christ which can truly save (Galatians 1:6).

Certainly people seem to understand that demons do bad things, although they do not seem to focus on this reality.

One list of demons I came across included a demon who gave people sore throats. Fortunately, however, it flees whenever the name of the angel Raphael is mentioned.

Another demon I discovered in my research causes shivering and numbness.

Yet another demon gives people indigestion. You thought it was that sausage pizza with extra onions, but it was actually spiritual warfare!

The church has not helped the problem with its superstitions, along with its anemic portrayal of good angels. Angels are usually seen in soft gowns and have effeminate faces. For centuries, the most popular way to portray angels was as fat little naked babies that just sort of hovered around to make people feel loved.

When we look in the Bible, we discover that good angels, used by God, were so impressive that they usually had to start their conversations with humans by saying, “Fear not,” or literally, “Stop being terrified” (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:13).

In one biblical account, one angel directed by God was responsible for killing nearly 200,000 enemy soldiers singlehandedly (II Kings 19). No fat little naked baby is going to do that.

To add to the confusion, the church has for centuries presented Satan and his demons as being outside of God’s control. At least they are presented as outside of His immediate command because it really takes a lot of praying and a lot of holy water

and usually a personal priest to be able to get rid of one of them.

The truth is that the Bible introduces us to a demonic world that is both terrifying to mankind and controlled by God in their every movement. We never want to underestimate the cunning and destructive power of Satan, but we do not want to overestimate his abilities – and the abilities of his demon forces – either.

People who dabble in sorcery, games like the Ouija board, séances, and divination are opening their minds to a real and powerful world that has only one desire – the destruction of their lives and their eternal damnation.

One woman I read of claims to be able to receive from her angel guides, direction specifically given for whoever sends in two hundred dollars. At two hundred dollars per vision, she will get a message for anyone from the spirit world. All someone has to do is give her their name and she will focus on a candle, slip into a trance, and receive a vision for them.

One person responded, “What could be more comforting in an age of broken families, economic uncertainty, rising crime, and loss of personal worth?”

The message of these spirit guides is, “Love yourself unconditionally, because we love you and we are always with you.”

In other words, “We care about the human race. We are here to give assistance, direction, and wisdom.”

The channelers say, “We can let you know your uncle really did make it to the other side, and we can prove we know this because he just told us his favorite shirt was the green flannel one.” And it is true that this was his favorite shirt.

Demons can communicate what they know to willing participants. And people burst into tears as they now believe that their uncle, who had nothing to do with Jesus Christ or the gospel of Christ, is safe on the other side.

This is demonic deception.

Divination, sorcery, and communicating with the dead through channelers or spirit guides are all forbidden by God in His word (Deuteronomy 18). These are not forbidden because they are just make-believe or hocus-pocus; these are forbidden because there is a real spirit world and the forces of hell desire to deceive and destroy.

The average person, however, believes in a spirit world where angels, or ghosts, or demons, or

whatever you want to call them, live. “It’s a little frightening, but I’ve got my crystal hanging on my rear view mirror for good energy. I’ve got my shiny ball standing at my front door to ward off the bad energy. I’ve got just enough religion to serve as a lucky rabbit’s foot, in case I need it, and I even have a picture of Jesus hanging up somewhere in the back room, and I’ve got a big white Bible on the coffee table for good measure. I’m safe!”

It is reassuring, is it not, that the spirit guides communicated in the woman’s vision, “We love you and we are always with you.”?

Ladies and gentlemen, the Bible presents an entirely different picture.

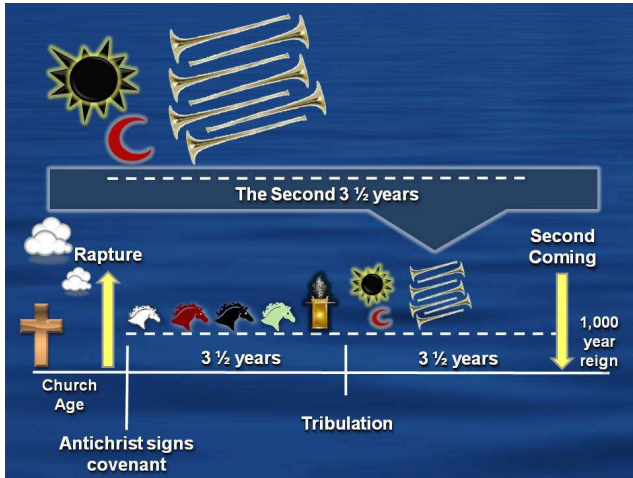
Demons are destroyers, accusers, and deceivers, and the day will come when God takes off their leash and gives them access to do to mankind what they have really wanted to do all along. They have wanted to torment the believer and kill the unbeliever, lest they repent and follow after God. They, like their fallen leader, are murderers from the beginning (John 8:44).

If we place our current study in Revelation in its broader context, the antichrist has been ruling much of the known world for several years – demon empowered and Satan controlled.

The antichrist has attempted to hold the scepter of world power. However, God continually unleashes worldwide calamities and disasters – earthquakes, pestilence, tsunamis, crashing asteroids, hail and fire from heaven, water turned to blood, shortened daylight hours, and more – which continue to hinder the antichrist’s hopes of creating and ruling a one-world utopia.

God in His mercy is still saving those who trust in Jesus Christ and refuse to follow the antichrist.

The judgments of God are increasing in their terror – more and more tormenting as seven archangels sound their seven trumpets of judgment. And nothing has ever been experienced on Earth like the events in Revelation chapter 9 – when the fifth trumpet blows and God opens the Abyss and allows demons to invade the world of humanity.



## The Abyss Unlocked

Let us rejoin our study at Revelation chapter 9, verse 1, as the fifth angel steps forward.

*Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.*

He was given, literally, the key to the opening of the Abyss, which is translated as the “bottomless pit”. There really is a bottomless pit – the phrase we use sometimes to refer to a thirteen-year-old’s stomach.

This phrase is from the Greek word “abussos” (αβυσσος), which refers to the inability of man to fathom its depth.<sup>ii</sup>

The apostle John uses words to describe this as a deep cavern that is connected to the Earth’s surface by a “shaft” with a lid that no one but God has the key to open.<sup>iii</sup>

This has led some to speculate that hell is in the center of the Earth. However, this is not talking about hell, but about the Abyss – where millions of demons are being held by God, awaiting this very hour of torment.

You may remember that when the demons left the demonized man, they begged the Lord not to send them into the Abyss (Luke 8:31). In other words, “Don’t incarcerate us with other demons.”

By the way, hell is not yet occupied by humans. The unbelievers who have died are awaiting their final judgment in Hades. They will eventually be taken to the lake of fire – eternal hell – where Hades will be emptied and all unbelievers will be placed for eternal punishment (Revelation 20:14-15).

Just as Hades is the preliminary place of suffering for unbelievers, the Abyss is the preliminary place of incarceration for many fallen angels – otherwise

known as demons – who await God’s commands and God’s final judgment.<sup>iv</sup>

This is the reason we will read about demons being bound temporarily in the Abyss in Revelation chapter 9, chapter 11 in verse 7, and chapter 20 in verse 1.

### Who is the fallen star?

The question needs to be asked, “Who is this star given the key to open the Abyss?”

Notice the phrase in Revelation 9:1,

*... I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth . . .*

The perfect tense of the verb that is translated “had fallen,” informs us that John did not see the star fall, but that it had fallen sometime in the past and was already on Earth when John sees *him*. And I say “him” and not “it” because this is a living being. Note verse 9:1b tells us,

*... the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.*

Verse 2a tells us,

*He opened the bottomless pit . . .*

I believe this star is Satan himself. This fits perfectly with the words of:

- Isaiah, who wrote of the fall of Satan through his rebellion, “*How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning . . . You have been cut down to the earth . . .*” (Isaiah 14:12)
- Jesus Christ, who said plainly, “*I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning.*” (Luke 10:18)
- Job, who referred to the angels prior to the fall of Satan as “*morning stars*” who sang together and shouted for joy at the creation of the universe by God. (Job 38:7)

This star is Satan who is now given the key to open the Abyss.

We know the giver of the key to be our Lord who, in chapter 1 of Revelation, was revealed as the One who holds

*... the keys of Death and Hades.* (Revelation 1:18b)

Satan is now given the key to open the Abyss and release this hoard of demonic beings which John will have to resort to simile in order to describe.

Notice Revelation 9:2-4.

*He opened the bottomless pit [the Abyss], and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.*

*Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

*They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*

There has been enough time elapsed between the first four trumpets and this trumpet for foliage to regrow to some extent.

The point is that these demons are only allowed to attack humans who are not sealed by God as His own.

This could be a reference to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists only. Or, at this point in the Tribulation, it could refer to all other believers who have come to place their trust in Christ after the rapture and who have survived thus far in the Tribulation.

Actually, even those who do not believe in Christ will be spared death. Notice Revelation 9:5-6.

*And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment 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 [they will want to die] and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.*

This judgment will be so terrifying and painful that people will try to kill themselves.

## **The Suffering Unimaginable**

You might be tempted to think, “This is only going to last for five months. When five months are up, these demons are evidently commanded back to the Abyss where they will wait until called again.”

You might think, “It’s only five months.” However, five months is a long time if you are waiting for something exciting to happen, but it is an eternity if you are waiting for something terrible to end!<sup>v</sup>

To the human race, it will seem as if this will never end and so, they will try to end their lives. However, John records, “death flees from them.”

In other words, the pistol will not fire, the knife will break, invisible forces will keep them from

jumping off tall buildings, poison will not work, they will float when they land in the river and they will survive. Any method of suicide will fail as unsaved humanity longs to die, but is not allowed to.

There is little wonder that people try to kill themselves. Notice John’s description of this demon terror from the Abyss. In fact, get your pencil ready because ten times, John will resort to using the words “like” and “appeared to be”. In other words, John will use similes to describe this supernatural scene with familiar analogies.<sup>vi</sup>

Notice Revelation 9:7.

*The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.*

In other words, this was not just some strange animal or freak of nature – something the State Fair would put in a booth and charge a dollar to stare at. These were creatures whose human-like faces revealed the shocking truth that they were demonic creatures with intelligence, emotion, rationale, intent, strategy, organization, and desire to inflict pain.

By the way, the ability of demons to assume all kinds of material forms will be further illustrated in this book of Revelation. In chapter 16, demons will take on the appearance of frogs.<sup>vii</sup>

John writes further, in verse 8,

*They had hair like the hair of women . . .*

In other words, they had long hair.

These creatures probably looked to John much like the Parthian warriors in ancient times. These warriors grew their hair long, not out of effeminacy, but for intimidation. It was startling and unusual, which made them appear only more fierce and intimidating.<sup>viii</sup>

Look at verses 8b-10.

*. . . and their teeth were like the teeth of lions.*

*They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.*

*They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.*

This is no science fiction movie.

Some have tried to lessen the strangeness of this judgment by interpreting these as missile-spitting helicopters and tanks, whose bullets sting.

There is no reason to interpret this any other way than plainly – at face value. The demons will assume the form of a most terrifying, painful, destructive creature, and will be given God-delegated time to chase, corner, bite, sting, and terrorize the human race.

The world will then finally know the truth of their spirit guides. The demons will have taken off their mask of love and concern. There will be no more, “We love you and we want to help you.”!

The truth about the demonic world’s hatred, bloodlust, and destructive intent will now be unveiled. The truth will be out and in the open. They hate the special, immortal creation of God – that can commune with Him and is loved by Him – the human being.

These demons will do as much as God allows.

Do not miss this – demons only operate under divine permission and for divine purposes.<sup>ix</sup>

Demons are the puppet servants of God. Note again:

- Verse 1 – “the key . . . was given to him [Satan]” – he did not have the key and could not get it if he wanted to – it was given to him;
- Verse 3 – “power was given [to] them” – delegated, temporary power;
- Verse 4 – “They were told not to hurt the [foliage]”;
- Verse 5 – “they were not permitted to kill anyone”.

Our sovereign Lord is firmly in total control of even the demons, even though it seems that the Earth is, at this moment, totally controlled by them.

By the way, this is true not only in the future Tribulation, but in our present tribulation. Your world might be in total chaos, but God is in total control of the chaos. He knows how long it will last – five hours, five months, or perhaps five years. In your times of tribulation, it is true as well that God has determined the depth of its pain and the extent of its sting – He has told it to go only so far and no further.

Even in total chaos, Jesus Christ is in total control.

Even though our world at this time might be unsettled, God is not unseated!

Even now,

*And though this world, with devils filled,*

*Should threaten to undo us,*

*We will not fear, for God hath willed*

*His truth to triumph through us.<sup>x</sup>*

No sooner have the scorpion demons been recalled to the Abyss, than another, even more terrifying army of demons prepare to gallop throughout the Earth.

## **The Euphrates Unchained**

Look at Revelation 9:13-15.

*Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,*

*one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are 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 would kill a third of mankind.*

The river Euphrates is prominent in scripture. It is the dividing line between east and west, between what we call the Near East and the Far East.<sup>xi</sup>

- It was the Euphrates that flowed out of the Garden of Eden;
- It was near the Euphrates that Satan tempted and beguiled Adam and Eve;
- It was near the Euphrates that the first murder occurred;
- It was at the Euphrates that Earth’s miseries were first introduced;
- It was at this river that the first martyr for righteousness was killed;
- It was the Euphrates where the Jews lived throughout their bitter exile;
- It was at this river that Babylon was built;
- It will be at the Euphrates that the kingdom of the antichrist will be rebuilt;
- It will be at this river that four powerful demons will be unchained and released to kill mankind.<sup>xii</sup>

Now some would say that these are good angels rather than fallen angels because they seem to be

similar to the four angels at the corners of the Earth in Revelation chapter 7.

However, notice that these angels are bound. The verb indicates that this has been their condition for some time.<sup>xiii</sup>

We never find any reference in scripture to good angels ever being bound.

These are fallen angels who have been kept bound until this divinely appointed time for them to perform as agents of God's wrath.<sup>xiv</sup>

Again, God commands even the fallen demonic world to deliver the torment of His wrath.

## **The Destruction Unstoppable**

If we thought locusts with human heads, long hair, and sharp teeth were strange enough, then we need to put on our seatbelts for the horsemen from hell. Look at Revelation 9:16.

***The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.***

In other words, "If you think I was mistaken or just took a wild guess, I actually heard this number used in reference to this army."

By the way, this is not some foreign army from the east. This is not the Battle of Armageddon in which the kings of the east will march on Israel – this comes later.

Furthermore, I do not know of any secret weapon of war some country is breeding that looks like this animal that breathes fire and smoke.

These are demonic, supernatural, and even more distinctive, indestructible.

Notice verse 17.

***. . . I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire [fiery red] and of hyacinth [deep smoky blue] and of brimstone [from the Greek word "theiwdes" (θειωδες), which is yellow]; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.***<sup>xv</sup>

Continue to verse 18.

***A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.***

So here come these charging stallions with heads that look like lions' heads, but also with the ability to

breathe fire out of their mouths like long-extinct dragons described in the book of Job.

This is not all. Notice verse 19.

***For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.***

Somehow the tails of these creatures have the ability to bite like a serpent – talk about a weapon of mass destruction.

Now when John saw this vision, remember there were not two hundred million people living on the Earth. This is probably the reason he adds the commentary for his readers, "I actually heard this number verified. I knew some of you wouldn't believe it."

Consider the fact that in World War II, the greatest number of soldiers the United States had at one time was twelve million. This is a demonic army of two hundred million – each one riding a strange creature – and they gallop in to terrorize and kill one-third of the rest of the people still alive on the planet.<sup>xvi</sup>

By the way, none of this is to purify the church. It is all to hurt mankind (verse 10) and to kill mankind (verse 15).

By the time we have taken enough of these verses at face value and simply and plainly interpreted the text without any mental or grammatical gymnastics, we can easily see why the apostle John wanted the church in Revelation chapter 3 to know they would be taken out of and away from this coming hour of tribulation. They would not be here.

The church has never been and will never be purified by demons.

However, just imagine this terror. This is like the creatures that ride into battle in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. With bodies that can run as fast as horses and teeth that can kill as quickly as their riders can kill, these demons and their animals will look like they are armored with fire; equipped with flamethrowers that will kill everyone in their path.

Remember, twenty-five percent of the world's population has already died during the first four seals. Millions more were martyred for their newfound faith in Christ. Still more died from drinking embittered water in a previous trumpet judgment. And now, one-third of those remaining alive are killed by demons and the fire-breathing animals upon which they ride.

When we add the numbers, we find that at least fifty percent of the world's population have died so far in the Tribulation – in a matter of only a few years.<sup>xvii</sup>

With this in mind, we would imagine that those remaining alive would say to the antichrist, “Some Messiah you are. Some world ruler you are.”

Instead, they remain under his spell, having been abandoned by God to believe the delusion of the antichrist's lies. Let us notice their response.

## The Rebellion Unmitigated

Look at Revelation 9:20-21.

*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.*

In spite of all that has occurred, the rebellion of the rest of mankind is unmitigated. Their hearts are not softened – they are hardened.

### Mankind clings to five sins

John records five sins that are clung to by mankind. These include:

1. Idolatry – Mankind will still cling to their idol the antichrist and worship the demon world and the natural world. As unbelievable as it may seem, men and women will remain committed to Earth and nature rather than the Creator.
2. Murders – Gone is all value of human life. People are surrounded by decaying corpses and think nothing of adding to their number. It is the “law of the jungle,” as people mimic the demon bloodlust.
3. Sorceries – This is a word that comes from the Greek word “farmakeia” (φάρμακεια), which gives our English word “pharmacy or pharmaceuticals”. It is the word for drugs. The word has an elastic use and can be used for incantations, charms, séances, witchcraft, contacting mediums, amulets, and spells.<sup>xviii</sup>
4. Immorality – This is unrepentant immorality, which is the Greek word “porneia” (πορνεία), and is the root word of the English

word “pornography”. It is a general term for sexual relations of any kind outside of marriage. Imagine, even in the face of death; even having survived scorpion demons and fire-breathing demon riders, mankind will cling to sexual addictions – pornography, adulteries, and drug fixes – as he abandons himself to the lusts of the flesh.

5. Thieving – People will be unwilling to give up their thieving, John also mentions. The word used has to do with stealing. Stealing will literally become a way of life. Morality and honesty will be nonexistent as people compete for the scarce supplies of food, clothing, water, and shelter, and even medicine.<sup>xix</sup>

This is a grim picture indeed, is it not?

## Conclusion

I believe a chapter like Revelation 9, however grim, can accomplish several responses in the believer's life.

1. **This chapter increases our appreciation of the sovereignty of God.**

God remains enthroned and in control.

2. **This chapter magnifies for us the mercy of God.**

Yes, mercy and grace. He could easily move to wipe mankind from the face of the Earth in one sweep of His hand, yet He will take several years to warn humanity and warn them and warn them and warn them and warn them again and again. By giving glimpses of His wrath and showing people the terrors of hell that await those who rebel against Him, He invites them to be rescued.

This is a chapter that says, “There is no hope but in Christ, so run to His mercy!”

3. **This chapter reminds us of the reality and seriousness of the demonic world.**

The demonic world is a real world. It is a limited world, dependent on the permission of God, but it is real – and it can be vicious.

This is a world that is not something to play with or dabble in. In fact, in this chapter, vicious bloodthirsty demons will hold the world hostage.

Let this be an invitation today, to all who do not believe in Christ, to run to Him. Run to Him – He is your only hope!

To those who do believe in Christ alone, thank Him. Thank Him that this will never be your

experience in life – and never in your life to come.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 10/26/2008 by Stephen Davey.

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- <sup>i</sup> John Phillips, Exploring Revelation (Loizeaux Brothers, 1991), p. 124.
- <sup>ii</sup> Fritz Rienecker and Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 832.
- <sup>iii</sup> Robert L. Thomas, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 1995), p. 28.
- <sup>iv</sup> William Barclay, The Revelation of John: Volume 2 (Westminster Press, 1976), p. 47.
- <sup>v</sup> Sam Gordon, Revelation: Worthy Is the Lamb (Ambassador, 2000), p. 210.
- <sup>vi</sup> John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume 1 (Moody Press, 1999), p. 262.
- <sup>vii</sup> Thomas, p. 30.
- <sup>viii</sup> Kendell H. Easley, Holman New Testament Commentary: Revelation (Holman, 1998), p. 158.
- <sup>ix</sup> Gordon, p. 308.
- <sup>x</sup> Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” translated by Frederick H. Hedge.
- <sup>xi</sup> Phillips, p. 130.
- <sup>xii</sup> Phillips, p. 130, and Gordon, p. 214.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Rienecker and Rogers, p. 833.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Thomas, p. 43.
- <sup>xv</sup> Rienecker and Rogers, p. 833.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Adrian Rogers, Revelation: Unveiling the End Times in Our Time (Broadman, 2004), p. 121.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Gordon, p. 215.
- <sup>xviii</sup> MacArthur, p. 272.
- <sup>xix</sup> Ibid., p. 274.