

## “All Hell Breaks Loose!” (Revelation 9:1-21)

How many of you have had a bad day? I want you to stop and think of the worst day you’ve ever had. Is that day registered in your mind? Now, I want you to imagine a day, a series of days, a hundred times worse than your very worst day. If you can envision that then you may have an inkling of what the tribulation will be like.

We have been working our way through the book of Revelation. In chapter 6, we began a study on the tribulation period. The seven-year tribulation will be the worst period of human history. It will literally be hell on earth. The Bible presents several purposes for the tribulation. For our purposes, I will share two.<sup>1</sup> First, the tribulation will demonstrate God’s righteous wrath as He judges a wicked world. Second, the tribulation will convince many Jewish people, scattered throughout the world, that Jesus is the Christ.<sup>2</sup>

We will now look at Revelation 9:1-21. In this chapter, we see another purpose of the tribulation: to unmask Satan’s true character. While in the future men will go to hell, in Revelation 9 hell comes to men.

**1. Satan wants to harm mankind (9:1-11).** In 9:1, John writes, **“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.”** The star that **“had fallen”** (or descended) from heaven is an angel.<sup>3</sup> This star is referred to in 9:1 by the pronoun **“him.”**<sup>4</sup> Some think that this angel is Satan but it is unlikely that God would entrust the key of the bottomless pit to Satan or to any fallen angel. Apparently, the Lord Jesus Christ gave one of His angels the key, since we are told in Revelation 1:18 that Jesus has the keys to death and hades. With this key the angel<sup>5</sup> unlocks the **“bottomless pit.”**

The **“bottomless pit”** (lit. shaft of the Abyss) is the abode of Satan (Rev 9:11; 20:1-3), the Beast (Rev 11:7; 17:8), and some demons (cf. Luke 8:31; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). It is evidently a preliminary prison, not their final abode, which is the lake of fire (Rev 19:20; 20:10; cf. Matt. 25:41). It is worth noting that this section is framed with the beings of the **“bottomless pit”** or **“Abyss”** (9:1, 11).

It is important to note that this angel is **“given”**<sup>6</sup> the key of the bottomless pit.<sup>7</sup> Throughout Revelation, God is the One who grants authority to Christ, angels, and evil beings. Nothing occurs without His divine permission. This is another reminder of God’s sovereignty. God is in complete control of all that occurs in the world. He also is a personal God who is able to exercise His sovereign care in your life.

In 9:2, God’s angel **“opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit.”** In Revelation **“smoke”** usually relates to judgment, doom, and torment (9:17, 18; 18:9; 19:3; cf. Gen 19:28; Exod 19:18).<sup>8</sup> This is confirmed by the rest of the verse that states the smoke went up **“like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.”** The smoke blocks the sun and the air (like smog or forest fires now). But there is stuff in the smoke...and it isn’t nicotine.

It is worth noting that, in this chapter, there are more occurrences of the words **“as”** and **“like”** than in any other chapter in the Bible. This shows how difficult it was for John to describe the scene which he saw in the vision. Therefore, we must be careful and wise as we interpret this chapter.

John continues his vision in 9:3: **“Then out of the smoke came locusts<sup>9</sup> upon the earth,<sup>10</sup> and power<sup>11</sup> was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”** It is quite certain that these are demons that assume some of the characteristics of locusts.<sup>12</sup> These locusts ascend from the Abyss, which is elsewhere in the Bible the abode of the demons.<sup>13</sup>

Also 9:11 informs us that they have **“the angel of the bottomless pit”** as their king. These locust-like demons have power **“as”** scorpions. Please notice that these demons are not called scorpions, nor are we told that they look like scorpions, just that they have the power (9:3) and torment (9:5) of a scorpion.

In 9:4, these demons **“were told not to hurt the grass of the earth,<sup>14</sup> nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”** Locusts are greatly feared because they can strip a country of every green thing, leaving man and beast alike to die from starvation. These insects move in giant columns, stripping away everything that is green. The plague of locusts that God sent against Pharaoh of Egypt brought Pharaoh to his knees... temporarily. But in this case, there is a total prohibition against the destruction of any plant life, which is the natural food of locusts. Instead, these locusts are **“given”** power to harm those who didn't have the seal of God on their foreheads—those who were not a part of the 144,000 (cf. Rev 7:2). It is reasonable to assume that all those who have become believers during the tribulation will also be protected.

So there are limitations placed upon these locusts. They are limited as to what men they can afflict (9:4) and how they can afflict those men. Verse 5 states that these demons **“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.”** Again, we see God's sovereignty, here prohibiting death and limiting the torment to five months. It is a sobering thought to realize that many of the demons of hell are not free to hurt us in this present age. Satan is managing to do a good job of destruction today, without his entire army to back him up.<sup>15</sup>

In 9:6, John records an awful sentence: **“And in those days<sup>16</sup> men will seek death and will not find it;<sup>17</sup> they will long to die, and death flees from them.”** Because of the influence of these scorpion-like locust demons, the earth's inhabitants will have reached their emotional, physical, and spiritual limit. Men and women alike will try to die, but will not be able to. Like Job, they will “long for death... And dig for it more than for hidden treasures” (Job 3:21). But it will elude them. They will cripple and injure themselves but somehow will be unable to finish the job.

Think of the worst pain you've ever experienced. The worst pain I think I've ever experienced was a case of food poisoning. I was so sick that I was afraid I was going to die and then I was disappointed when I didn't. This period of tribulation is far more severe than having food poisoning for five months. It will be like the movie, *Ground Hog Day*, where actor Bill Murray experiences the same day over and over.

What an awful time period. Can you imagine wanting to die and not being able to? The Lord refuses to give these rebels any satisfaction. Is God a sadistic God? No, but He is a just God that gives men and women who reject Him what they want: separation from Him.

This is a five-month foretaste of eternal hell. During this part of the tribulation, Satan and his host are given a short time to treat men as they will in hell. Please hear me: Hell is a place that no sane person would ever want to go. Don't risk spending eternity in hell. Trust in Christ today.

The next five verses are a parenthetical section where John describes the creatures he saw from head to tail. In all, he enumerates eight characteristics of these demons.

1. **“The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle.”** These creatures had mobility. These were invading creatures. They came like cavalry.
2. **“On their heads appeared to be crowns like gold.”** Their crowns probably symbolize their victory over the objects of their oppression.

3. **“Their faces were like the faces of men.”** This may imply intelligence.
4. **“They had hair like the hair of women.”** This may infer long, loose hair, giving the impression of ferocious beings. The opposite interpretation might be true as well; that they are of such striking beauty and charisma that few can reject their false teaching. Many people will buy into their propaganda because of the authority and power of these false teachers.
5. **“Their teeth were like the teeth of lions.”** This is a symbol of something frightening. Those who surrender to false teaching will find it vile and hurtful to their belief. False teachers will show no mercy on their followers.
6. **“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.”** These demons were not vulnerable to attack and the sound of their false teaching was intimidating.
7. **“They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.”** These demons are able to wreak havoc for five months through stinging tails.
8. **“They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon,<sup>18</sup> and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.”<sup>19</sup>** Proverbs 30:27 tells us that “locusts have no king.” Again, this further proves that these are not literally locusts. They are demons that are in submission to a king—**“the angel of the abyss”** who is called **“Abaddon”** and **“Apollyon”** both meaning “destruction.” This angel is not Satan, as many believe. Nowhere in Scripture is Satan referred to by either of these names. More importantly, this angel is confined to the Abyss (until he is released by the star angel) while Satan and his angels are roaming free in the heavenlies.

In these eleven verses, Satan’s true colors are revealed. His purpose is to harm all people. If he could, he would kill every person that has ever lived or ever will live. He would then take humanity straight to hell. But, of course, he can’t because God has limited his authority and is sovereign over him. As Martin Luther, the great reformer, said, “Even the devil is God’s devil.” We don’t have to fear him. God has given Satan the power that he possesses.

**2. God wants to humble mankind (9:12-21).** In 9:12, John writes, **“The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.”<sup>20</sup>** The three “woes” that the eagles pronounced in Revelation 8:13 are quickly coming to pass. The fifth judgment woe has occurred, the sixth and seventh judgment woes are to come. This verse is transitional and clarifies that the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpet judgments are also the first, second, and third woes.<sup>21</sup>

In 9:13-16, four angels are released. John writes, **“Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard<sup>22</sup> a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.”** Someone near the four horns (symbolic of power) of the golden altar in heaven, probably the angel identified with it in 8:3, gave a command after the sixth angel blew the sixth trumpet (cf. 8:2, 6).

In 9:14, this angel says to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, **“Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”** These are evidently four angels that John had not seen before. They must be fallen angels since good angels are not bound (cf. Rev 20:1-3; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). God had a purpose for them to fulfill and ordered their release to accomplish His will (cf. 9:1-11).

Scripture does not record when or why God bound these angels, but evidently He restricted them as punishment. Perhaps He imprisoned them when Satan rebelled against Him.

These angels are bound **“at the great river Euphrates.”** Euphrates was in the Mesopotamian Valley, which was the cradle of civilization. It was where the garden of Eden was located; it was where the first sin was committed; it was where the first lie was told; it was where the first murder was committed; and it was where the first grave was dug. It was in this region where God saw that the wickedness of man was great and so He sent the flood. It was where men attempted to build a tower that would reach into the heavens, so that God confounded the languages. Nimrod built the tower of Babel. It was this region where ancient Israel’s most oppressive enemies came from—the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes, and the Persians. It is here that God has kept in confinement, four fallen angels who will be loosed upon the earth, when the sixth trumpet is sounded. It might be that God chose to bind these angels at the place of Satan’s first apparent victory, as serving notice that this “victory” will be overturned. Thus, the four bound angels are but the first fruits of a far greater victory to follow.

These **“four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year,<sup>23</sup> were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind.”** These angels were ready for a specific assignment at a specific hour in history.<sup>24</sup> This specificity highlights the preciseness of God’s divine plan. His purposes will be accomplished, perfectly and on schedule (Isa 46:9-11). The task of these angels was to put one-third of those who dwell on the earth to death (cf. 8:13). This figure accounts for more than the accumulated deaths of all the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century put together. In today’s numbers, this accounts for over two billion dead.<sup>25</sup>

Keep in mind; this will result in approximately half the population of the earth, alive at the beginning of the tribulation, being dead at the end of this judgment. One-fourth died under the fourth seal judgment (Rev 6:7-8), and many more died as martyrs and for other reasons (cf. Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21-22). However, it is only the earth-dwellers; those in rebellion against God, who suffer death as a result of this woe (cf. Rev 9:20).

In 9:16, John states, **“The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard<sup>26</sup> the number of them.”** It is worth noting that the massive army of 200 million is often thought to be a reference to China. While this may be possible, it is more likely that this army is not human but demonic. These are hellish horsemen riding satanic steeds. Several reasons support this: (1) The fifth and sixth trumpet judgments go together since they are called the first two of three “woes.” Since the fifth trumpet is clearly demonic, it is fairly certain the sixth trumpet is as well. (2) Fallen angels, like those of the fifth trumpet judgment, lead this army (9:15). Since the leaders are four fallen angels, it makes sense that the troops they are leading are also demons. (3) There are other examples in Scripture of supernatural armies (e.g., 2 Kgs 2:11; 6:13-17; Rev 19:11, 14). (4) The weapons mentioned—fire, sulfur, and smoke—are always supernatural weapons in the Bible and are associated with hell, four times in Revelation (14:10-11; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8).<sup>27</sup>

In 9:17-19, John provides a description of the horses and riders he saw. John records, **“And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.”** John saw what these horsemen looked like. Horses were swift implements of war in ancient times. Red, blue, and yellow breastplates covered both horses and riders. This was apparently their only armor, and it is defensive armor. Hyacinth is a flower that is most commonly blue, and brimstone is sulfur that is yellow.

Lion-like horse heads could be very different from those of ordinary horses or just heads of horses that appear exceptionally bold and majestic. Lions are terrifying (cf. 10:3), fierce (cf. 9:8), and destructive (cf. 13:2). Natural horses do not breathe fire, smoke, and brimstone. This verse suggests that this army is probably something other than a human army of cavalry, probably an angelic army (cf. 9: 9). Note: The description of the horses also argues for an angelic army. An angelic army of 200,000,000 demons is not hard to imagine. That's roughly 80% of the population of the United States.

In 9:18, John writes, **“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.”** Fire, smoke, and brimstone are natural elements that God used to bring judgment in the past during similar conditions (cf. Gen 19:24, 28). He may use them again, or they may represent other agents of destruction. “Plagues” recalls the plagues in Egypt.<sup>28</sup> The repetition of the definite article “the” in the Greek text (*tou*), indicates that these are three distinct plagues. Together they will be responsible for the largest death toll in human history so far (cf. 9:15).

These four fallen angels will be instigators in what will result in the death of one-third of the world population. You will recall that the rider of the fourth horse brought death to one-fourth of the world population from war, hunger, pestilence, and wild beasts. This additional third will mean that half of the earth's population will have died during the tribulation. By today's standards, that would be more than one billion people.

In 9:19, John continues, **“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.”** This further description of the horses supports the conclusion that they represent angelic instruments of divine judgment other than natural horses. Some interpreters have suggested that what they represent are modern weapons that shoot both forward and backward, such as missiles. The locusts had the power to injure like scorpions with their tails (9:10), but these horses have power to kill like serpents with their tails, which is worse (cf. 9:15).

These last two verses are two of the saddest in the entire Bible. John concludes by observing, **“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,<sup>29</sup> 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<sup>30</sup> nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”** Those that survived this sixth trumpet judgment refused to repent<sup>31</sup> **“of the works of their hands.”<sup>32</sup>** This was a refusal to change their minds about their worship and works.

The sins of humanity are generally of two sorts (Luke 10:27). Verse 20 focuses on sins directed against God—they do not love God supremely (the first four of the Ten Commandments, Exod 20:1-11). Verse 21 directs our attention to sins directed against other human beings—they do not love their neighbors as themselves (the last six of the Ten Commandments, Exod 20:12-17).<sup>33</sup>

One of the most amazing things about these two verses is that demons are worshipped. Yet, demons are the instruments of man's destruction in the fifth and sixth trumpets. Men worship the very things that destroy them. Hard-core unbelief and stubborn, willful rebellion is the result of these plagues. Just as Pharaoh's heart was hardened by the Egyptian plagues, so the hearts of these men and women are hardened by the plagues of the last days.

People are prone to believe satanic lies. It is what Paul calls a “deluding influence” (2 Thess 2:11), a lie from the Devil. Since mankind believes this, many are rendered finally unable to repent. It is because they have begun, unknowingly perhaps, and innocently, to worship demons.

Did you know that there are over 600 warnings in the Bible about judgment and evil? The judgments that will take place on earth are just a small glimpse of an eternal hell. It is a place of fire and smoke. It is a place of pain, as pictured by the stinging scorpions. Hell is a place of crying. Hell is a place where a person cannot die. How could anyone survive in a place of such agony? Hell is not a place where the good ole’ boys sit around and drink beer and play poker to pass the time. It is a place of separation, torment, and agony. Please do not make light of rejecting Christ.<sup>34</sup>

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Two other purposes include: The tribulation will end the time of Gentiles and affect the deliverance of the Jewish people from Gentile dominion (Isa 24:21-23; 59:16-20; cf. Matt 24:29-31/Mark 13:24-27; Rom 11:25). The tribulation will purge the earth of wicked people in order to establish the messianic kingdom in righteousness (Isa 11:9; 13:9; 24:19-20; Ezek 37:23; Zech 13:2; 14:9).

<sup>2</sup> See Rev 7:1-4; Deut 4:27-30; and Matt 24:14. The tribulation will convince the Jewish nation of their need for the Messiah in order to produce a national regeneration (Isa 59:20-21; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 20:34-38; 36:25-27; 37:1-14; Dan 12:5-7; Zech 12:9-13:2). This will result in a massive return of Jews to the Land of Israel (Ezek. 36:24; 37:21; Zech. 8:7-8).

<sup>3</sup> Angels are also referred to as stars in Rev 12:4 and Job 38:7.

<sup>4</sup> Gk. *auto*: pronoun personal dative masculine singular.

<sup>5</sup> This may be the same angel who later comes from heaven again with the key and a great chain to imprison Satan in the Abyss for the duration of the millennial kingdom. (Rev 20:1-3)

<sup>6</sup> Gk. *edothē* (from *didomi*), see Rev 1:1; 2:7, 10, 17, 21, 23, 26, 28; 3:8, 9, 21; 6:2, 4, 8, 11; 7:2; 8:2, 3; 9:1, 3, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Gk. *abussos*, see also Rev 9:1,2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3; cf. Luke 8:31; Rom 10:7.

<sup>8</sup> Smoke can also have connections with holy things (Rev 8:4; 15:8).

<sup>9</sup> Locusts were the eighth plague of Egypt (Exod 10:4-15). The Old Testament attests the destructive power of locusts (cf. Deut 28:38; 2 Chron 7:13; Joel 2:25). They often swarmed in apparently limitless numbers (cf. Ps 105:34; Nah 3:15). Joel likened what would come on the earth in the day of the Lord to a locust invasion (Joel 1-2). The locust is a symbol of destruction throughout the Old Testament (cf. 1 Kgs 8:37; Ps 78:46). Yet the locusts John saw had the power to hurt people as scorpions can, which normal locusts do not. They also had a leader (9:11), which normal locusts do not (Prov 30:27).

<sup>10</sup> The smoke and the locusts are decidedly different from the incense and the prayers of Rev 8:3-5. Smoke is offensive and is evidence of destruction. Incense is pleasant and precious, and is associated with what is lovely and desirable. In reality, both the prayers (and incense) of chapter 8 and the locusts (and smoke) of chapter 9 are instruments of God's judgment, accomplishing His purpose of judging the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Gk. *exousia* is defined as "potential or resource to command, control, or govern, capability, might, power." BDAG, Electronic Ed.

<sup>12</sup> Bock writes, "Should we assume the prophet saw something like a motion picture of the future in his vision and then attempted to explain it in terms of images he understood? Or did he see a picture precisely in the images he gives, images that paint reality rather than describing it? Which description of those options is 'more literal'? Is it the one that focuses on how it might look to us, so we explain what he meant in words and images very different from the prophet's terms and images? Or should one focus on how it looked to the prophet and how it appears in the ancient text? We would thus attempt to understand his words in their literary character, both by examining the image in context and the Old Testament images and background(s) it evokes." See Darrell L. Bock, "Interpreting the Bible—How Texts Speak to Us," in *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1993), 91.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 8:31; cf. Rom 10:7; Rev 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3.

<sup>14</sup> If you recall in Rev 8:7 the first trumpet judgment of hail, fire, and blood burned up all the green grass. Therefore, how can these locusts be told not to hurt "the grass of the earth?" Two legitimate explanations have been suggested. First, the grass may grow again since some time elapses between these two references. Second, it may only be the grass that is green that perishes now and what is now dormant and brown will be green when the events of 9:4 transpire.

<sup>15</sup> David Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night* (Dallas: Word, 1997 [1990]), 144-145.

<sup>16</sup> Since 4:1 John had been reporting what he saw, but now he spoke as a prophet predicting the future. For the first time the Apostle ceases to be the exponent of what he saw, and becomes the direct organ of the Spirit. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (London: Rivingtons; Cambridge: Deighton, Bell 1866), 4:641. This is one of the indications that Revelation is prophetic rather than only apocalyptic in genre.

<sup>17</sup> The Greek phrase *ou me* ("will not") is the strongest negation in the Greek language. It is a double negative that can be translated "no way," "never" or "absolutely not."

<sup>18</sup> Abaddon is referred to as the "Beast who is to come up out of the Abyss." (Rev 11:7; 17:8; 13:1). Rev 11:7 and 17:8 are both clearly referring to Abaddon as the "Beast" who will ascend from the Abyss. In 13:1 we see the same thing in symbolic form, since the sea was often a symbol of the Abyss as well as the Gentile nations.

<sup>19</sup> Only the apostle John supplied information bilingually in the New Testament (cf. John 1:38, 42; 4:25;

6:1; 9:7; 11:16; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16; Rev 1:7; 3:14; 12:9).

<sup>20</sup> While most place 9:12 with 9:1-11, a study of the three “woe” texts (8:13; 9:12; 11:14) shows clearly that each introduces the following woe. This is made especially clear by 11:14, which follows the interlude of 10:11-11:13 rather than the sixth trumpet judgment. While it does tie the interlude into the fifth and sixth seal trumpets, it leads more closely into what follows. Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation: ECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 377.

<sup>21</sup> It is unclear whether the eagle (8:13) or John is the speaker, though John seems the more likely candidate. “After these things” indicates that the woes are consecutive, not simultaneous.

<sup>22</sup> Instead of seeing something (cf. Rev 9:1), John now heard something.

<sup>23</sup> This is the only place in Scripture that piles up the “hour-day-month-year” combination. Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation: HNTC* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1998), 160.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 12:6; 16:12; Matt 25:34, 41; Mark 10:40; Luke 2:31; 1 Cor 2:9.

<sup>25</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 380.

<sup>26</sup> Whenever John uses the Greek word *ekousa* (“I heard”), it refers to prophetic and visionary material he is given from above (e.g., Rev 1:10; 4:1; 5:11; 6:1, etc.). Osborne, *Revelation*, 381.

<sup>27</sup> See also Mark Hitchcock, *Bible Prophecy* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), 210-11.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Exod 11:1 LXX; Rev 9:20; 11:6; 13:3, 12, 14; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21; 18:4, 8; 21:9; 22:18. The following chart demonstrates the similarities between the Tribulation and the Egyptian plagues.

<b>What was God’s purpose in the 10 Plagues of Egypt?</b>	<b>What is God’s purpose in the great tribulation?</b>
1. To free His people from bondage.	1. To free and redeem the world from Satan.
2. To punish sin and judge Egypt for their wickedness.	2. To punish sin and judge the world for its wickedness.
3. To demonstrate His supremacy over false gods.	3. To demonstrate His supremacy over false gods.
4. To lead people to repentance.	4. To lead people to repentance.

<sup>29</sup> Idolatry is ultimately worship of demons (cf. Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20), an understanding that John reflected here. Ironically, these earth-dwellers refuse to stop worshipping demons that are responsible for their misery under this sixth trumpet judgment. In his day people fashioned idol images out of the materials that John mentioned. Today objects that people venerate made of these same materials can be bought in stores. John reminded his readers of the helplessness of these idols. Cf. Deut 4:28; Ps 115:5-7; 135:15-17; Isa 44:12-20; Dan 5:23.

<sup>30</sup> The Greek word translated “sorceries” (*pharmakon*) can refer to poisons, amulets, charms, magic spells, witchcraft, or any other object or practice that makes someone susceptible to sin.

Cf. Exod 22:18; Lev 20:27; Deut 18:10-12; 1 Sam 28:7; Acts 8:9; 13:8; 19:13-15.

<sup>31</sup> The call to repentance is frequent in the seven letters (Rev 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19) addressed to believers in seven churches in Asia Minor. However, the call for unbelievers to repent is found in 9:20, 21 and 16:9, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Elsewhere in Scripture the phrase “the works of their hands” refers to idolatry (cf. Deut 4:28; 27:15; 31:29; 2 Kgs 19:18; 22:17; 2 Chron 32:19; 34:25; Ps 115:4; 135:15; Isa 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Jer 1:16; 10:3, 9; 25:6, 7, 14; 32:30; 44:8; Hos 14:3; Mic 5:13; Hag 2:14; Acts 7:41).

<sup>33</sup> Easley, *Revelation*, 161.

<sup>34</sup> Helpful Principles from Rev 9:

- Satan is real (Rev 9).
- God is in control (Rev 9)
- God’s judgment is real (Isa 28:21).
- Scripture is supernatural (2 Tim 3:16-17).
- Death is inevitable (Heb 9:27).
- Hell is certain (Matt 25:41).
- Man is depraved (Rom 3:10-11; cf. Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-4).
- The tribulation is temporary (Rev 9:5)