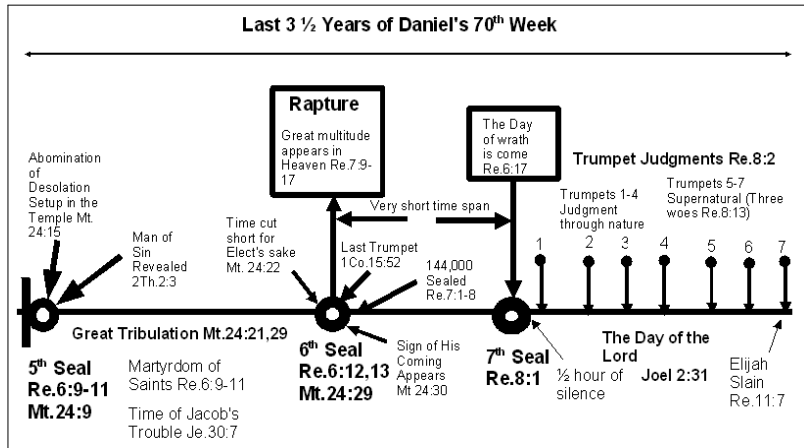


## Newsletter February 2018

In our November 2017 Newsletter, we had moved on in our continuing study of the book of Revelation into Chapter 6, wherein we observed Jesus as He began to break open the seven seals of the scroll He had taken from the offering hand of his Father to claim his glorious inheritance of the earth and receive absolute authority over all that dwells upon it. As each seal was broken open, a momentous event simultaneously occurred upon the earth in reaction. The first four seals, brought forth four “horsemen.” The first was a person, the Antichrist, whom Satan sponsored to head up a global government. The second horseman brought forth a great world war, and the next two brought forth starvation and disease in the war’s aftermath. Altogether, one quarter of the earth’s population was killed.

When the fifth seal was broken open, it brought forth in response a period of great tribulation on earth during which men indiscriminately slaughtered each other without cause or reason; it was a world gone insane (cf. timeline in the figure below). Many Christian saints were killed (cf. Re. 6:9-11), and Jews were heavily persecuted (cf. Je. 30:7). The breaking of the sixth seal by Jesus brought the great tribulation to a sudden end, as a mighty earthquake shook the entire earth from pole to pole. Simultaneously, a great cataclysm took place in the heavens as the sun was blackened, and the moon turned blood red. The sky then rolled away into total emptiness, and against the backdrop of that darkness, the Lord Jesus was seen descending out of Heaven in bright clouds with mighty power and great glory (cf. Mt.24:30). In consuming fear, the reprobate



population of the earth deeply mourned over their pending judgment and sought to entomb themselves in caves and mountains to avoid looking upon the face of the one whom they despise and have cursed. “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand” (Re.6:17)?

In our December 2017 Newsletter, we discussed the brief interval of time between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seal in which 144,000 elect Jews were sealed to remain alive on earth through the trying times ahead (cf. Re.7:1-8), and the Church, consisting of both the living and the dead in Christ, was transported off the earth into the heavens to forever be with Him (cf. Re. 7:9-17). The men and women remaining on the earth were the reprobate who had despised the Gospel and have rebelled against both God and his Christ.

In our January 2018 newsletter we continued on in our study by examining the text of Revelation Chapter 8. With the breaking open of the seventh seal of the scroll in Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ began to send forth seven severe judgments upon the earth and its inhabitants – symbolized in Scripture by the blowing of seven trumpets by seven angels (cf. timeline in the figure above). These seven judgments are divided up into two groups consisting of four initial judgments brought about through natural celestial means followed by three supernatural judgments having no origin in nature. During the first four judgments we discussed last month, our Lord brought about catastrophic events upon the earth coming out of the vast regions of space. They caused massive physical destruction and inflicted great bodily harm upon the earth’s inhabitants. The earth’s environment was totally wrecked by the catastrophic celestial events of these first four judgments.

In this newsletter we shall discuss the first two of the remaining three trumpet judgments. We concluded last month’s study with the following verse from Chapter 8, which also provides an introduction to this month’s study:

**“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound” (Re.8:13)!**

The sounding of the first four trumpets had brought judgments upon the earth through the elements of creation. While those were natural judgments that Christ had directed, the three judgments that are to follow will employ the supernatural in which the power of the underworld will be unleashed against mankind! Demons, all of

which have been forbidden to indwell men, will be given freedom to indwell and do as they wish with the sinful rebellious men and women that remain upon earth during this period. None of the previous judgments, though extremely severe, can compare to these next three judgments for instilling pure terror in the hearts of men. Just to read about it in our study is bone-chilling, and to realize that Jesus must be the one to set it into motion is hard for us to accept, but the savior of the world must judge his enemies until they become his footstool (cf. Ps.110:1).

**“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” (Re. 9:1).**

The fifth angel blew his trumpet and John saw a star fall from Heaven to earth. Unlike the physical star (Greek *astare*) described in the third trumpet judgment, the pronoun “him” is used here to personify this “star.” This is most certainly Lucifer or Satan as we read in Isaiah 14:12: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” In Luke 10:18, the Lord Jesus said, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” Jesus said this in response to his disciples joy in having power over demons (cf. Lu.10:17). Satan has taken every opportunity to destroy mankind spiritually. It began in Eden when he enticed Adam and Eve to sin, thus plunging the entire race into ruin earning death. Later, he entered into Cain to slay his brother Able. When Seth was born to Adam to began a godly line, Satan sent his demons (fallen angels) in force into the posterity of Cain to seduce the women of this godly line – thus intermingling the two lines until all of mankind became so wicked that their every thought was evil continually (cf. Ge.6:1,2,5). God destroyed that corrupted world with a global flood (cf. Ge.7:21), and the worse of those demons that had inhabited mankind during that era were imprisoned in order that the human race could enjoy a new genesis through Noah and his family. Nevertheless, not all demons had been imprisoned; some had succeeded in indwelling men in Jesus day in direct opposition to divine orders. We find that Jesus consistently cast out these “devils” (Greek, *daimonizomai*), from men during his ministry on earth (cf. Mt. 8:16).

In the Greek, “bottomless pit” found in verse 9 is *abussos phrear* meaning an extremely deep dark shaft, abyss, or chasm. By implication, an abyss is also a prison, and Peter tells us in his second epistle that fallen angels (i.e. demons) have been imprisoned within just such a place: “...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” (2Pe.2:4). The Greek word for Hell in this verse is *tartaroo*, meaning the deepest part of *Hades* or the grave. In Luke 8:31 we find that the demons that Jesus had cast out feared being sent into the “deep,” which is also translated from *abussos*; they feared being sent into this deep abyss.

The opening to this abyss has been closed and sealed thus requiring a key to open it. We note in this verse that the key to this bottomless pit was given to Satan. The Greek word *kleis* used here may describe a physical key or it can be interpreted figuratively to mean a specifically granted authority to open that which has been shut. Inasmuch as Jesus now holds the keys to *Hades* and to death (cf. Re.1:18), we must assume that it is Jesus who intentionally provides the key of this abyss to Satan, thus permitting him to open it.

**“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” (Re.9:2).**

At this time, Satan will open the “pit of the abyss” where his minions have been held captive. There is no doubt that this abyss is a real place, as is Heaven and Hell, but speculation abounds regarding its nature and location. Its mouth (or opening) must be located somewhere upon the earth, inasmuch as when it was opened by Satan smoke coming forth from it filled the air and darkened the sun. If the mouth is on earth, it logically follows that the shaft itself must extend downward from this opening toward *Hades*, the center of the earth, where internal molten magma and perpetual fires burn with great heat “as in a great furnace.” Certainly, no physical being could exist there, but demons who are spirit-beings apparently can survive this acrid environment.

**“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” (Re.9:3).**

When Satan opens the bottomless pit, smoke of its perpetual fires will first come out followed by the imprisoned demons themselves. From John’s unique position as an observer in Heaven, he is enabled to see these invisible creatures in a form that he and we can relate to, which he then recorded for us here in this text. Accordingly, the demons are described in this text as locusts, because they literally swarm as do locusts from out of the ground. However, unlike common locusts that chew with their sharp teeth, these demons have the power to sting with a venomous segmented tail as does a scorpion on earth.

**“And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. And it was given them 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 it striketh a man” (Re.9:4,5).**

We know with certainty that John is using the word “locusts” in a figurative sense here inasmuch as these “locusts” do not physically devour vegetation as do real locusts, but instead they attack mankind spiritually by injecting a spiritual venom into them as a scorpion does with its chemical venom. We should take note that these demons are not allowed to sting any who have been protected by the seal of God. This specifically refers to the Jewish remnant that has been sealed to continue on earth through this terrible Day of the Lord so that they will not be infected (cf. Lu.10:20). The fact that this verse does not specifically reference this Jewish remnant leaves open the possibility that there could also be a number of Gentiles who have not received the mark of the Antichrist, and through having accepted the witness of the Jewish remnant will have repented and may have also received the seal of God on their foreheads. Certainly, we know that there will be populated Gentile nations on earth at the beginning of the Millennial Age and this could account for their miraculous survival.

Here we must take note that unlike the proceeding four trumpet judgments, we are given a specific time for the interval between the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpet of five months, during which time the reprobate earth dwellers will be severely tormented by demons that God has allowed to indwell them.

**“And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them” (Re.9:6).**

While the demons will not be allowed to kill men, they will be allowed to control and wreck them mentally and spiritually. Both men and women will be suddenly and painfully attacked, and then they must suffer the terrible venomous aftermath of demon possession. They “shall desire to die” to put an end to their suffering, but “death shall flee from them.” Both men and women will suffer terrible mental agony without any hope that even death can relieve them of their pain. They cannot take their own lives, for they are restrained from doing so by the indwelling demons. Their mental agony does not mean that the insanity brought on by those demons will not cause men to inflict terrible physical pain upon themselves and others (cf. Mk.5:2–5), but they will be kept alive throughout it all inasmuch as they are being prepared as pawns to serve in a demonically inspired war.

**“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” (Re. 9:7-10).**

We discover from John’s further description of the demons, that they are shaped like horses and are very warlike in appearance, heavily armed, and well protected. They have gold-colored areas on the top of their heads that look like crowns, faces that simulate the faces of men, long hair like women, and sharp teeth like lions. They had a heavy substance across their breasts that simulate iron breastplates. As do locusts, whose wings make a loud droning sound, these demons create a loud drumming sound like the “chariots of many horses running to battle.” Again we note that we are given a specific time for the interval of demonic suffering between the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpet of five months (cf. Re.9:5).

**“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* (Re.9:11).**

Common locusts have no leader, but independently swarm out of the ground to satisfy their voracious hunger. Unlike common locusts, these demons are highly organized in ranks like an army preparing to go forth, for it is said that they have a king with the name of *Abaddon*, which in the Hebrew means “destroying angel,” or *Apollyon* in the Greek that means “destroyer,” which is also a title applied to Satan. Certainly Satan is the ultimate ruler of these fallen angels that earlier followed him in his rebellion against God, but this angel of the deep abyss who leads the demon army out of the pit appears to be his subordinate, not Satan himself.

**“One woe is past; *and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter*” (Re.9:12).**

This warning is extremely ominous considering the amount of pain already inflicted by the first woe that came forth from the fifth trumpet.

**“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men” (Re.9:13-15).**

When the sixth trumpet sounds, four angels of destruction will be loosed from the river Euphrates. The fact that those angels were previously bound indicates their evil nature and intent – they are in fact fallen angels; they are demons. The river Euphrates is where Eden and Ur were located and is the very cradle of human civilization; this river has served to separate the eastern and western worlds. The clash between these worlds are about to take place, but the fact that there are four demons may indicate that they are divided into four armies, perhaps one for each major continent. The destruction instigated by these demons will continue for “an hour, a day, and a month, and a year”, but the death toll is limited to one third of mankind, such that two-thirds will survive the onslaught.

**“And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone” (Re.9:16,17).**

Here we find preparation for a war about to be waged by demon-possessed men who will kill uninfected men that are in the path of their destruction. We find in the description of these horsemen a similarity to the demons described earlier – although not identical. While the demons were not previously allowed to kill men, these demon-possessed men will wage an unprecedented war of physical destruction and death. The total size of the armies is an incredible 200 million, as they prepare to engage in battle. In John’s day, the horse had become a powerful asset in warfare affording the soldier increased speed, range, agility, and protection. The men that rode on them were heavily protected with body armor (mail) that would have been far too heavy for a foot-soldier to carry. From the description John gave of the “horses” he saw, they obviously are not of the common equine species, but something functionally similar. Today’s technology has replaced body armor with much lighter and more effective protection, and the horse has been replaced with mechanized implements of war having properties far exceeding that of an equine cavalry. John would have had no knowledge of the advanced armor utilized by modern-day cavalry nor of any more-advanced weapons that could become available in our future. This may account for him describing what he saw as “horses” having heads like stealthy lions, with fire, smoke, and brimstone coming out of their mouths. This description could also represent demon-contrived weaponry beyond what John could grasp or hope to accurately convey to his immediate readers – or to us even in this day.

**“By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt” (Re.9:18,19).**

The third part of mankind was killed by the fire, smoke, and brimstone of the weapons of war. Perhaps we could equate these with artillery and flame throwers, chemical gas, and explosive projectiles and bombs, and they could involve the employment of nuclear and laser weapons as well. Of course, this is all a matter of speculation; the fire, smoke, and brimstone could be something that far exceeds our perception of modern warfare altogether.

**“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” (Re.9:20,21).**

One would think that after having endured the great world war of the Antichrist during which one-quarter of mankind had perished, and having lived through the terrifying time of demonic destruction, wherein one third of the world’s remaining population had perished, men and women would be more than ready to repent and turn to God, pleading for his mercy and deliverance. Yet, we see that this is not so! Although the terrifying demonic war will last for more than a year, during which a third of the earth’s population will perish, the great number of people remaining on earth will not repent of their paganism and moral depravity. They continue to worship the demons, engaging in acts of sorcery through drugs, potions, and incantations. They amass and idolize material objects gained through theft and the works of their hands – even as the seventh and last trumpet is about to sound bringing forth final absolute judgment. It will put to an end all rebellion against Christ in preparation for his thousand-year Kingdom-age reign upon a gloriously restored earth. © Arthur J. Smith February 2018