

ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE

Revelation 9

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. One day when I was in kindergarten I got in trouble for hitting a girl. The teacher sent a note home to my parents. My dad sat me down for a talk. He said, “Andy, boys should never hit girls. God made us stronger to protect girls, not to beat them up. I’m not going to spank you this time, but if you ever hit a girl again, I’m going to give you the biggest spanking of your life.” I never hit a girl again. What was my dad telling me? If I ever hit a girl again, all hell would break loose.
2. Today we are going to see all hell break loose in the book of Revelation.

II. REVELATION RECAP

1. In the first three verses, we are told that Revelation is all about events that “must soon take place,” because “the time is near” (Rev 1:1-3). Revelation is not about the end times, but about the near future – the first century.
2. Rev 2-3 – Before Jesus gives the visions, He has a specific message to the seven churches in Asia.
3. Rev 4 – God is on the throne as judge.
4. Rev 5 – God holds out a seven-sealed scroll. The scroll is God’s divorce certificate against apostate Israel. The seven seals represent God’s seven-fold judgments and curses against Israel.
5. Rev 6 – Jesus, the Lamb, opens the first six seals, one at a time. When each seal is opened, John sees a different vision of destruction that awaits Israel.
6. Rev 7 – Before Jesus opens the seventh seal, John sees a vision of what will happen to the Christians as judgment is being carried out against Israel. The Christians in Jerusalem will be able to escape before the Romans level the city. At the same time, all the Christians around the world who were being killed for their faith will go to heaven to be with God.
7. Rev 8 – Jesus proceeds to open the seventh and last seal, and seven trumpets were given to seven angels. As each angel blew a trumpet, John sees another vision of wrath to be poured out on first century Israel.
8. After the fourth trumpet, an eagle flying overhead cried out, “Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth [land], because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound (Rev 8:13)!”
9. Rev 9 – The first two woes, or the fifth and sixth trumpets. More wrath is to be prophesied against Israel.

III. WOE

1. Usually we use the word “whoa” in two ways:
 - i. As a verb to tell someone to slow down.
 - ii. As an exclamation when we see someone cool or amazing. “Whoa dude!”
 - iii. But that word “whoa” is different. It’s even spelled differently. That is “whoa”, whereas the word in Revelation is “woe.”

2. Here the word “woe” is an announcement of judgment. It is a way of saying, “You are about to experience the terror of God’s wrath.”
3. The prophet Isaiah said this to himself when he had a vision of the throne room of God. He knew that no man could see God’s and live (Ex 33:20). When he saw God, he became aware of his own sinfulness, and he assumed he was about to be struck dead. He said, “Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Armies (Is 6:5).” He was announcing judgment on himself. He was saying, “I am about to experience the terror of God’s wrath!”
4. On several occasions Jesus used this word against the Jews, especially the leaders.
 - i. He said “woe” to the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum, because He did most of His miracles there, and they didn’t repent. He said it would be more tolerable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for them, because if they had seen such miracles they would have repented (Mt 11:20-24).
 - ii. In Matthew 23 he said seven “woes” to the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy and for being bad spiritual leaders. He said, “How can you escape being condemned to hell?” And then he said, “All the righteous blood shed on the earth [of prophets and preachers] will be charged to you... Truly I tell you, all these things will come on this generation (Mt 23:33-36).”
 - iii. He announced “woe” against Judas for his betrayal (Mt 26:24).
 - iv. He announced “woe” against those who are rich materially, but poor spiritually (Lk 6:24-25).
5. Paul announced “woe” against himself if he did not preach the gospel. He was saying, “If I don’t obey God and preach the gospel, then I will experience the terror of God’s wrath.”
6. In Revelation, the eagle announced “woe” against Israel because they were about to experience the terror of God’s wrath. That wrath came initially through the Roman army as they destroyed Israel in AD 70, but then it would primarily be experienced in the afterlife.
7. Each of the last three trumpets is called a “woe.”

IV.

THE FIRST TWO WOES

1. The First Woe (fifth trumpet): 1-12.

- i. *1 The fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth. The key for the shaft to the abyss was given to him. 2 He opened the shaft to the abyss, and smoke came up out of the shaft like smoke from a great furnace so that the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the shaft. 6 In those days people will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.*

1. John “saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth.”

- a. This is Satan.

- b. **Luke 10:18** “I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”

2. “The key for the shaft to the abyss was given to him. 2 He opened the shaft to the abyss, and smoke came up out of the shaft like smoke

from a great furnace so that the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the shaft.”

- a. What is the abyss?
 - i. It is sometimes translated “the bottomless pit.” It is the prison of evil spirits, or demons.
 - ii. One time Jesus exorcised a demon called Legion, and they begged Jesus not to banish them to the abyss (Lk 8:31). So, Jesus allowed them to enter into a herd of pigs.
- b. So, the key to the shaft (hole) to the abyss was given to Satan.
- c. He opened the hole to the abyss and smoke came out.
- ii. *3 Then locusts came out of the smoke on to the earth, and power was given to them like the power that scorpions have on the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green plant, or any tree, but only those people who do not have God’s seal on their foreheads. 5 They were not permitted to kill them but were to torment them for five months; their torment is like the torment caused by a scorpion when it stings someone.*
 1. Satan opens the abyss, and out comes smoke. Then out of the smoke comes locusts.
 2. Who are the locusts? They are demons. Who else would come out of the abyss?
 3. We are told four details about their mission:
 - a. Unlike normal locusts, they are not to harm the greenery.
 - b. They are not to harm believers, but only those who do not have God’s seal on their foreheads (i.e. unbelievers). (In Revelation 7 the angels went out and marked all of God’s servants with a seal on their foreheads.)
 - c. They are not to kill people, but to torment them, like the torment caused by a scorpion sting.
 - d. Their torment was to last for five months.
 4. What does this mean? It means that an army of demons was about to be unleashed on Israel in the first century.
 5. **David Chilton** wrote, “John is thus warning his readers that hell is about to break loose upon the land of Israel... The Abyss is being dredged up to cover the land with its unclean spirits. Apostate Israel is to be cast out of God’s presence, excommunicated from the Temple, and filled with demons... By God’s direction, Israel was about to be attacked by a demonic army from the abyss.”
 6. Jesus prophesied that this would happen.
 - a. **Matthew 12:43-45** 43 When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest but doesn’t find any. 44 Then it says, ‘I’ll go back to my house that I came from.’ Returning, it finds the house vacant, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other

- spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person's last condition is worse than the first. That's how it will also be with this evil generation."
- b. During Christ's ministry, He spent three years in Israel casting out demons. He cleaned up the place. But Israel rejected Him as their Messiah. So He prophesied that eventually seven times more demons would return, and things would be even worse. And even more startling, Jesus said this would happen to that generation.
 - c. **David Chilton** "Jerusalem had been "swept clean" by Christ's ministry; now it would become "a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit."
 - d. **Douglas Wilson** "Jesus had spent three years casting demons out of the House of Israel. Israel was the house that was found empty, swept, and garnished. All the demons that had been cast out – and there had been a multitude – went and gathered up a host of more demons, like a plague of locusts with a sting, and they poured back into that wicked generation. The Jewish defenders of Jerusalem in the final months were demon-possessed, hell bent on destruction."
7. The Jewish War with Rome lasted from AD 66-70. As Rome was making its way south from Galilee, destroying one city at a time, things were not going well in Jerusalem. The Jews were not united against Rome. There were three factions that developed, who fought each other for power. In fact, as the Roman General Vespasian was nearing Jerusalem, he decided to delay the attack on Jerusalem so that they warring factions could continue to kill and weaken each other, making his job all the easier. When Rome finally surrounded the city, the siege lasted five months before they broke into the city and destroyed it. During those final five months, all hell broke loose within the city walls as the city defenders turned on each other. It was as if host of demons entered the city and possessed the people, causing them to go crazy.
 8. **David Chilton** wrote, "The entire generation became increasingly demon-possessed; their progressive national insanity is apparent as one reads through the NT, and its horrifying final stages are depicted in the pages of Josephus' *The Jewish War*: the loss of all ability to reason, the frenzied mobs attacking one another, the deluded multitudes following after the most transparently false prophets, the crazed and desperate chase after food, the mass murders, executions, and suicides, the fathers slaughtering their own families and the mothers eating their own children. Satan and the host of hell simply swarmed throughout the land of Israel and consumed the apostates."

9. The first woe (fifth trumpet) is describing the demonic possession of the Jews (especially the Jewish defenders) during the final stages of the Jewish War leading them to self-destruct.
 10. Next their appearance is given.
- iii. *7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. Something like golden crowns was on their heads; their faces were like human faces; 8 they had hair like women's hair; their teeth were like lions' teeth; 9 they had chests like iron breastplates; the sound of their wings was like the sound of many chariots with horses rushing into battle; 10 and they had tails with stingers like scorpions, so that with their tails they had the power to harm people for five months. 11 They had as their king the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon. 12 The first woe has passed. There are still two more woes to come after this.*
1. The appearance describes the demon-possessed city defenders:
 - a. "Something like golden crowns on their heads": They were competing for who would rule Jerusalem; they believed that the winner would ultimately defeat Rome and rule the world.
 - b. "Their faces were like human faces." This indicates intelligence. These are people, not actually locusts.
 - c. "They had hair like women's hair." As we'll see in a moment, some of the city defenders engaged in cross-dressing and homosexual behavior.
 - d. "Their teeth were like lion's teeth." They were deadly.
 - e. "They had chests like iron breastplates." They were well defended; it took five months for Rome to break through.
 - f. "They had tails with stingers like scorpions." They inflicted terrible pain on the people of Jerusalem.
 - g. "They had as their king the angel of the abyss." Who was their king? Satan. His name is Abaddon in Hebrew, and Apollyon in Greek. Both mean "Destroyer."
 2. Listen **Josephus** as he describes the Jewish defenders in Jerusalem as the city was under siege. "With their insatiable hunger for loot, they ransacked the houses of the wealthy, murdered men and violated women for sport; they drank their spoils with blood, and from mere satiety they shamelessly gave themselves up to effeminate practices, plaiting their hair and putting on women's clothes, drenching themselves with perfumes and painting their eyelids to make themselves attractive. They copied not merely the dress, but also the passions of women, devising in their excess of licentiousness unlawful pleasures in which they wallowed as in a brothel. Thus they entirely polluted the city with their foul practices. Yet though they wore women's faces, their hands were murderous. They would approach with mincing steps, then suddenly become fighting men, and,

whipping out their swords from under their dyed cloaks, they would run through every passerby."

3. One more quote from **Josephus**. "No age ever bred a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this from the beginning of the world. I suppose that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains, the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overwhelmed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by; for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistic than were those that suffered such punishments; for by their madness it was that all the people came be destroyed."
4. So, to conclude, the first woe (fifth trumpet) is describing the demonic possession of the Jews (especially the Jewish defenders) during the final stages of the Jewish War leading them to self-destruct and kill each other and the general population. All hell broke loose.

2. The Second Woe (sixth trumpet): 13-21.

i. 13 The sixth angel blew his trumpet. From the four horns of the golden altar that is before God, I heard a voice 14 say to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 So the four angels who were prepared for the hour, day, month, and year were released to kill a third of the human race. 16 The number of mounted troops was two hundred million; I heard their number.

1. God spoke from the four horns of the altar. This is a reference to the incense altar in the Holy Place of the temple, which represents the prayers of God's people.
2. What were the people praying for? When Jesus broke the fifth seal, John saw the souls of the martyrs under the altar, and they were crying out for God to avenge their blood. To punish the Jews for persecuting and killing them (Rev 6:9-11).
3. In answer to their prayer, God releases four angels at the great Euphrates river to kill a third of the people.
4. Why the Euphrates river? Historically, this is where all of the Jews' great enemies came from. The Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians all came from the Euphrates river, the northeast border of the Promised Land.
5. This second woe is a warning that just as God sent destroying armies from the Euphrates in the past, He is about to do it again. When the emperor Vespasian sent his son Titus to destroy the Jews, the 10th Legion, part of the destroying force, came from the Euphrates.
6. "Two hundred million." These are mounted troops. It literally means myriads of myriads. It is not an actually number. It is like our number gazillion. A very large number.
7. Unlike the locusts, who just tormented the people for five months, these mounted troops will kill a third of the people. This refers to the

Roman legions being unleashed on the Jews. The Romans destroyed thousands of Jews on their way to Jerusalem, and when they destroyed Jerusalem they killed over a million Jews.

8. Just like John gave a description of the locusts, he also gives us a description of the mounted troops.
 - ii. *17 This is how I saw the horses and their riders in the vision: They had breastplates that were fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and from their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. 18 A third of the human race was killed by these three plagues—by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came from their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, because their tails, which resemble snakes, have heads that inflict injury.*
 1. They had breastplates that were red, blue and yellow.
 2. The heads of the horses were like lions.
 3. The horses breathed out fire, smoke, and sulfur.
 4. Their tails had poisonous snake heads that struck people.
 5. **G. R. Beasley-Murray** “The picture is meant to be inconceivable, horrifying, and even revolting.”
 6. **Milton Terry** writes that “the immense army of cavalry depicted in the symbols of the sixth trumpet to be no other than the overwhelming military force of the Roman empire.”
 7. The idea conveyed with the picture of these mounted troops is that the Roman army is going to be a terrifyingly destructive force unleashed against the Jews.
 - iii. *20 The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands to stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which cannot see, hear, or walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.*
 1. The Jews who survived the destruction of Jerusalem still did not turn to Christ.

V. CONCLUSION

1. In 70 AD, God unleashed the might of the Roman empire against the Jewish state. And the Jewish nation was wiped out. Many people survived, but the Jewish state did not. Jerusalem was completely leveled. The temple was torn down. The priesthood was annihilated, and the sacrificial system was erased. The Jewish people, and the Jewish religion was never the same.
2. Why? Because these people rejected and murdered the Savior of the world, and then persecuted and murdered His servants.
3. And Yet after all this, the surviving Jews still did not turn to Christ. All hell broke loose, yet they persisted in their sinful ways.
4. Sometimes we say that before a person will change, they need to hit the bottom of the barrel. But for some people the barrel is bottomless. They never hit it. No

matter how hard life gets, no matter how badly their sins beat them up, they persist in their wicked ways.

5. I had a big brother like that. He started getting into drugs in middle school. And it got him into trouble. He went to Juvenile Detention. When he got out, he got into more trouble and went back to jail. He repeated this pattern his whole life until a couple of years ago when he overdosed on fentanyl and died. He never hit the bottom of the barrel. All hell broke loose on his life on multiple occasions, but he refused to change.
6. When you choose to sin, you choose to suffer. When you reject Christ, you are rejecting the best life. The more you reject God and His will, life will continue to beat you up and leave you empty.
7. But Jesus came to give us life; abundant life. A full and meaningful life. Eternal life. He died for our sins so that we can be forgiven and go to heaven. He invites you to come to Him. To be forgiven. To be changed and renewed. To receive life. Don't be like the first century Jews who refused to repent. Turn from your sins and turn to Christ today.