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Revelation 9

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Revelation 9.

Topics.

- A star fallen from heaven is given the key to the bottomless pit.
 - The fifth trumpet and first woe and locust with the power of scorpions.
 - Do not harm those with the seal of God on their foreheads.
 - People will seek death and will not find it.
 - Locusts like horses, hair like woman's and teeth like lions.
 - Locust with breastplates of iron and wings like the noise of chariots.
 - Stings like scorpions and power to hurt for five months in their tails.
 - The sixth trumpet, second woe, Apollyon and the angel of the bottomless pit.
 - Four angels at the Euphrates release mounted troops to kill a third of mankind.
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A personal note: though I have always loved reading and studying the Scriptures and have now walked with Christ and in God's grace for around fifty years the following studies should not be taken to be dogmatic, inflexible or the final word on the matter since I am fully aware that my mind is limited by mortality and that greater understanding of God's revelation is continually becoming clearer before our eyes as we move closer to the time of Christ's glorious return in glory.

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The previous chapter: began with seven angels being given seven trumpets, the first angel blew his trumpet and a third of the trees and grass was burned up, the second blew his trumpet and a third of the sea became blood, the third blew his trumpet and a third of the waters became wormwood, the fourth blew his trumpet and a third of the sun, the moon, and the stars were darkened. The chapter ended with an angel crying, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

THE FIRST WOE THE FIFTH ANGEL BLEW HIS TRUMPET

REVELATION 9:1

A Star Fallen from Heaven is Given the Key to the Bottomless Pit.

- **Revelation 9:1:** And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven (fall from heaven in KJV) to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

When reading this book, it should always be kept in mind, that though it appears there is a general order of events, these are visions of the future that John is seeing and writing down in the present time, which means the symbolical representations may not always follow the exact chronological order. It is very likely that in some cases one event may overlap another so that some are mixed together until the final-end, while others are interludes that give greater detail of events already seen or are

inserted to give encouragement to the church during troublesome times, especially for those living during the final antichristian global empire. These last three trumpets are called, the woe-trumpets. (Rev. 8:13). The emblem of a fallen star is used elsewhere in the Bible. Isaiah in the following verse speaks of a Day Star falling from heaven.

- How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! (O Lucifer son of the morning in KJV) How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! (Isaiah 14:12).

The word lucifer comes from the Hebrew word (*heylel*) (*halal*) which means brightness, (i.e., of the morning-star), and to be clear, and give light. It carries the idea of making a show, to boast, to be loud and insistently demanding attention and boasting in self and being unwise. The meaning of the word Lucifer (or star) as used in the context of (Isaiah 14:12) can be summed up in the following two words, "extreme pride." Isaiah chapter fourteen is not to be literally interpreted, as it is the language of personification which the Bible often uses. It personifies the prideful and powerful king of Babylon descending to the grave and all the kings of the earth who have died prior to him rising-up from their thrones to up to meet him saying, "You the mighty and proud king of Babylon have become weak as we have." The local fulfilment of this is the destruction of the Empire of Babylon by Cyrus king of Persia, the expression, "The whole earth is at rest and quiet," refers firstly to the whole land of Israel being at rest which it was after Israel had returned to their land and rebuilt the temple of God after their seventy-year captivity in Babylon. However, this prophecy is not limited to the era of Babylon, but embraces the Babylon spoken of in the following verses of Revelation:

- A second angel followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality." (Rev. 14:8).
- On her (a woman full of abominations sitting on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns) forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." (Rev. 17:5).
- An angel called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast." (Rev. 18:2).
- The kings of the earth will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." (Revelation 18:10).
- A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more." (Revelation 18:21).

Jesus said, "I saw Satan Fall like Lightning from Heaven."

- The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. the (Luke 10:17-19).

Christ described Satan as lightning falling from heaven. This does not refer to some spiritual evil entity that dwelt in heaven until now, but refers to self-serving prideful men who are in high places of religious authority and power, but are in opposition to God's Kingdom. "Satan falling like lightning from heaven," means that that everything that has been an adversary to the Kingdom of God is now losing its stronghold. This is because multitudes (Jews and Gentiles) from every region are receiving the message of God's Kingdom that Jesus' anointed seventy-two disciples have taken to various cities, towns and villages. The prideful and hypocritical religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes), the political religious system, the priesthood, the synagogues and all that was an adversary to Christ were losing their stronghold on the common people, because they are turning to the Gospel

of Christ's Kingdom that the seventy-two had been proclaiming. The seventy-two going out is a changing moment in history it is the beginning of the Gospel going around the world and being confirmed by miraculous signs. For further information concerning Satan, click or tap [Satan and his Family](#) and select the title: Satan.

In Revelation chapter twelve: we read that the devil Satan and His angels were thrown down to the earth.

- Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev. 12:8-9).

The expression, "thrown down," means they are defeated and that their power and authority has been taken. War in heaven does not actually mean that there is a literal war in heaven where God and the angels' dwell. There can be no war between God who created all things; is the source of all life; holds all things together and is the immortal, invisible, Almighty God, to go against Him in battle would be like a five-year old boy trying to go to battle against a black belt karate instructor clearly there would be no struggle, no combat and no fight. The real war is on earth, it is referred to as being in heaven, because the war is spiritual and against God's people and God's Kingdom. This is a picture of pride and the spirit of mankind that is hostile toward God and His Kingdom personified as a great dragon whose character is that of a serpent, the devil and Satan. Those who are hostile toward God and are warring against God's Kingdom are referred to as a dragon, for the following three reasons:

1. They have tremendous corrupting power and influence over multitudes of people and nations.
2. The word dragon presents a perfect picture of a monster that is to be feared.
3. It is a creature that has the power to do great destructive damage.

For these three reasons, the word dragon is used figuratively to picture any evil powerful corrupt organization (secular or religious) government or nation that is hostile toward God and His Kingdom. Michael and his angels refer to faithful Jews who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ (and by extension all the faithful in Christ), while the dragon primarily refers to Rome and the powerful religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) who plotted the murder of Jesus and then aggressively set about to brutally and cruelly destroy the church, and persecute, torture, imprison and put to death those who followed Christ, but by extension the dragon can apply to any powerful ruler or nation who is aggressively against the Lord Jesus Christ and his Kingdom.

A star fallen from heaven: these verses show that the expression, "a star fell from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the bottomless pit," symbolises the head of some great religious and powerful institution or organisation or church falling from his great and high position of religious influence and most likely the collapse of the entire organisation itself. The fact it is spoken of as having the key of the abyss implies that this vast global religious system was teaching false doctrines and a twisted and distorted Gospel which instead of bringing life and salvation, brought deception and death. It implies that the person this star symbolises originally held a high exalted position in the Kingdom of God as a minister much like Judas held with Christ but has fallen from his exalted position and ceased to be Christ's minister to become a minister of antichristian doctrines and worship and as such has brought global religious error upon the inhabitants of the world. It should be noted that the error of such destructive doctrines will not be blatantly obvious (especially in the latter days), except to those who know and understand the Scriptures, since they will not only be spoken by men gifted with

brilliant skilful oratory, but will also be intermixed and surrounded with Scriptures (howbeit out of context). It is almost certain they will include such things as justification by works, forgiveness of sin by confessing to human priests etc., and doctrines that appeal to self, ego and pride and most likely promise prosperity, healing and success.

Key to the shaft of the bottomless pit: this is a different key to what was given to Peter; he had the keys of the Kingdom of heaven. In the book of Matthew Jesus asked Peter, "who do you say that I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus said to him:

- Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 16:15-19).

The key that Peter had that opened the doors of heaven was the truth that, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." This truth is the key that opens the door to the Kingdom of heaven to those who receive it and shuts the door to those who deny it. In contrast to the key Peter had, the key that opens the gates of the bottomless pit, refers to deceptive and destructive doctrines, that rather than led people to heaven led them to the lake of fire, a symbol of eternal death (i.e., utter annihilation and total extinction). Peters keys are keys of heaven, keys of truth, keys of knowledge, keys of God and of Christ and keys of the life.

The keys of the bottomless pit are keys of ignorance, keys of deception, keys of Satan and of the devil and keys of death. The fact this the star is said to be given the keys to the bottomless pit, signifies that the powerful king this star symbolises could only rise to the ungodly fame, power and authority he does and bring about the ungodly events spoken of in the following chapters, because God permits him to do so.

The calamitous events, that are described in the following chapters could not have come to pass, except by the permission of God's and according to His divine plans and purposes, for He has the sovereign power to restrain and shut up all evil powers of the world should He chose to do so. It could be rightly said that many powerful kings and emperors (especially Roman) and the Roman popes and Mahometan were given the keys to the bottomless pit. But, the one who will be given the full power that these keys can open, will be the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-4) (an antichrist) (1 John 2:22) the wicked impostor and deceiver and his hostile ungodly beast government. He will rise-up in the latter days and deceive nations into going to war against Christ, symbolized by the dragon, the beast and the false prophet gathering the kings of the whole world, to assemble for battle on the great day of God the Almighty at the place called Armageddon. (Rev. 16:13-16). In chapter nineteen we read that the King of kings and Lord of lord will strike down the nations, and tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty, and then we read:

- The beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh. (Rev. 19:15-21)

The man of lawlessness, the beast kingdoms, the false prophet may have all the power of the bottomless pit available to them, but it is no match for Christ, at the appointed time he will crush all evil and all powers hostile toward him, his heavenly Father and his people as easily as a boot crushes a toxic and poisonous bug.

Smoke from the Bottomless Pit and the Sun and Air Darkened.

- **Revelation 9:2:** He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

He opened the bottomless pit: (v2) with the key that was given to him, meaning he made use of his universal power and authority over all churches, religious organisations and denominations and over their decrees and teachings, and imposed upon them his own laws and ecclesiastical teaching and obliged all to submit to his ungodly principles and practices. There have been many such ruler in past generations of which two of the most obvious would be:

1. Mahomet, who may be regarded as an eastern antichrist, especially after the publishing of his Koran, and obliging all his followers to receive it as the infallible word of God.
2. The Popes and Church of Rome who have also influenced much of the world with many false teachings and superstitious worship and regard their church to be the mother of all churches and the only church that teaches the true infallible word of God.

The ultimate and most powerful of these will be the final the the man of lawlessness (man of sin in KJV) (2 Thess. 2:1-4) (an antichrist and the son of destruction) (1 John 2:22) who will rise-up in the latter days with all the power of the dragon, the serpent, the devil and Satan. (Rev. 12:9) (Rev. 20:2). In chapter twenty we read that there is an even more powerful heavenly angel that descends from heaven also with the key to the bottomless pit, but not to open it, but to shut it. This angel throws the dragon, the serpent, the devil and Satan, into the bottomless pit, and shuts and locks it over him, so that he cannot deceive the nations any longer, until Christ's millennial reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords are ended. (Rev. 20:1-3).

There arose a smoke out of the pit: (v2) the smoke here can symbolise the following two things:

1. Since thick smoke darkens the sun and the air and hinders the eyes from seeing the light of the sun, smoke coming up out of the bottomless pit symbolises worldwide false doctrines deceptive teachings and false religion that blind the mind from understanding God's word and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and fill the earth with spiritual darkness and religious error. It signifies prideful, hypocritical false teachers who have a form of godliness and speak lies and by skilful oratory and positive motivational speeches deceive the hearts of those seeking God and influence the world toward ignorance, error, superstitious worship, and wickedness. These all continue to increase from generation to generation from various religious sects, the decrees of popes and their councils, and the Koran of Mahomet and especially those that will abound in the latter days through the false prophet and the beast nations.
2. When Abraham beheld the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the smoke of the cities went up as the smoke of a furnace.
 - The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. ²⁴Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven --- NOW GO TO VERSE TWENTY-SEVEN --- ²⁷And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸And he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and he looked and, behold, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. (Gen. 19:23-28).

The destruction and devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and smoke was a result of God's wrath upon these enormously corrupt cities (Gen. 19:23-28). This same great displeasure of God is represented by the same figurative expressions of smoke and fire in the following verses:

- The earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. ⁸Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. (Psalm 18:7-8).

In the context of John's vision smoke rising-up out of the pit may also be seen to symbolise total-destruction and utter-annihilation of all things

Symbolism of the sun, the air and the smoke: the sun can be taken to symbolise the Gospel that brings light to the mind and heart and the air to symbolise those who receive the light of the Gospel, while the smoke symbolise the false lights of worldly power, worldly wisdom and the false light that comes through prideful, hypocritical false teachers of religion and all that is contrary to God, to Christ, to the Gospel and to his people. Christ, the sun of righteousness, has been greatly obscured by the following two powerful and global religious groups on earth:

1. The Roman church and the Pope taking upon himself to be head of the global church and to be the infallible interpreter of Scripture and allow indulgences; give out pardons; teach doctrines of superstition and especially of justification by works and many other errors.
2. Mahomet, who represents Jesus only as a mere man, and exalted himself above him as a greater prophet.

By the decrees of the popes and the teachings of the Koran of Mahomet the light of the Gospel and the teachings of Christ have been darkened as smoke darkens the light of the sun. The bottomless pit does not open itself; the key is always in the hands of some false powerful teacher. The great temptation of the faithful believer is the temptation to fellowship with the masses of believers united in the vast assembly of false doctrine.

NOTE: three things should be kept in mind concerning these visions, firstly, interpreting the exact detail is difficult, secondly, broadly speaking they are descriptive of that great war which the church is waging with the world, which is light against darkness and good against evil and thirdly, the faithful are assured that good will win over evil and that the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdoms of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15).

However, though the faithful are assured of victory, such a victory may not always be easy to see as they travel toward their heavenly home made without human hands through the wilderness and darkness of this world. The triumph of the faithful church will often not only appear doubtful, but even appear to be in the hand of the enemy, but faith disregards what the natural eye sees and sets its trust and hope upon what God promises. This following series of visions show that advance of Christianity is marked by the manifestation of evils as well as the establishment of good.

REVELATION 9:3-5

Locusts Not to Hurt those with the Seal of God on their Foreheads.

- **Revelation 9:3-5:** Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. ⁴They 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 the seal

of God on their foreheads (in their foreheads in KJV) ⁵They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.

The characteristics of the locust: locusts are one of the world's most devastating pests. A kind of metamorphosed grasshopper, they can eat their own weight every day and can invade parts of 65 countries from West Africa to India to Australia, affecting 20 percent of the of the earth's land. In 2008, a locust swarm nearly seven kilometres long plagued Australia. [Sources: Robert A.M. Conley, National Geographic, August 1969; Jane Brody, New York Times, May 17, 1988]. Locust swarms with 40 billion insects have reached an altitude of 10,000 feet. One locust expert told the New York Times, "No other insect in the world travels so far, over such inhospitable country, merely to keep alive, and none is so able to swiftly expand both in numbers and its territory when conditions develop in its favour." The locust will eat almost anything; their wings make a clattering sound as they travel; when approaching in swarms they create an ominous hum and there are times when the swarms are so large they block out the sunlight. They are normally shy, solitary creatures, but in a swarm, they are an unstoppable moving cloud of millions of flying grasshoppers capable of stripping fields of crops in a matter of hours. For these reasons, the locust is a fitting symbol for the power and destructive might of armies. The Oxford team has found that "hot-spots" on the hind legs of the locusts are stimulated when they group together turning the relatively harmless insects into destructive pests.

Even today millions of locusts have swarmed across several countries presenting major problems in the Middle East and many South African Nations. In the town of Eilat (a popular place with British tourists) thousands of dead locusts were found piled up in swimming pools. Natural locusts do not have a sting, whereas these locusts were given power like the power of scorpions (v3) that do have a sting, nor do natural locusts have a king arranging their swarms (Prov. 30:27), whereas these locusts have a king directing and controlling them. These locusts are sent with the command not to hurt the vegetation, which clearly shows that they are not literal locusts since vegetation is their natural food, and locusts do not attack humans to kill and eat them, so no human would need to be sealed for protection. It is a good principal of Bible study when things are attributed: to living creatures that do not agree to their nature, the terms are to be understood symbolically, not literally. It is not natural for locusts to attack and kill humans, therefore we are safe to suppose that the locusts in this context signify men not insects.

Darkened sky: Locusts in the East are so remarkable for their numbers that they often appeared like clouds and darkened the sky. In Exodus it is written:

- The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. ¹⁵They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened. (Exodus 10:14-15).

Locusts were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth: (v3) having power like scorpions, signifies they could inflict great suffering, grief and sorrow. There are about two thousand species of scorpions, of which only about twenty-five to forty species can deliver enough venom to cause serious or lethal damage to humans and only about twenty-five of these species can deliver stings that are fatal to humans and most of these potentially lethal scorpions can't kill healthy adults. Though in most cases they do not kill healthy adults their neurotoxins can cause troubling symptoms as convulsions; tingling and burning around the area that has been stung; numbness of the body; difficulty swallowing; difficulty breathing; blurry vision; seizures and in some rare cases, pancreatitis (a painful inflammation of the pancreas). Some suppose that these locusts cannot refer to armies, because an army would kill, and not merely torment and it could not be said of an army that they had no power to kill. These facts have lead many commentators to conclude that the locusts

and scorpions signify the Roman Papal Church and their popes, bishops and clergy, who did not physically kill, but did introduce many doctrines that instead of bringing life and peace to the mind, brought torment and death, especially their doctrine of justification by good works. The problem with this idea is that though it is true that these corrupt and false doctrines can figuratively be said to sting like a scorpion and bring mental torment and emotional pain as a locust sting does these doctrines never came to an end, so they do not fit the five-month analogy. However, the statement "they could not to kill them," may carry the idea that they could not utterly kill and destroy so, as to wipe an entire nation, a people or race utterly out of existence so that they were no more. They may kill, harm and hurt great nations and empires, but never utterly wipe the nation or empire itself from the face of the earth.

Do not harm the green plants: (v4) or any green plant or any tree, signifying they are not real locusts since this is all that they do eat.

The seal of God on their foreheads: (v4) (in their foreheads in KJV), having God's name written on or in the forehead and being sealed both carry the same thought, and signify the following three ideas:

1. God has forgiven, redeemed, sanctified, justified, saved and baptised the redeemed in the Holy Spirit, and fully adopted and accepted them into His family as sons and daughters of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and set them apart for His purposes.
2. God and the Lord Jesus Christ fully owns and protects the faithful (physically or spiritually depending on the context) and keeps them secure for eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory and will keep them from the judgments of wrath.
3. God has written the name of the redeemed in the Lambs Book of Life; they have Christ's words and the Gospel on their heart and he is the uppermost thought of their mind and greatest passion of their innermost being, and there is always a conscious awareness of him and his heavenly Father.

For further information concerning, God's name written on the forehead, click or tap [Overview of Topics in Revelation](#) and select the title: God's Name Written on the Forehead.

Not to harm those with the seal of God: (v4) could not hurt those who have the seal of God on their foreheads, signifying that no matter how bad things got, those saved by faith in Christ would be kept for eternal salvation. The seal of salvation and God's all-powerful grace will keep His people from the destruction of the final great apostacy. Though the power is limited to a short season during such events the faithful will share the common calamity but will be protected from the errors of apostacy and their salvation will be kept safe and secure in Christ. The following verses show that such errors and divisions test and prove the sincerity of all who claim to be Christians:

- For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, ¹⁹for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. (1 Cor. 11:18-19).

Not hurt any green thing: (v4) it was, commanded them that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor yet any tree; but only those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (Rev. 7:1-3). Whatever the locust plague may be, it is one which cannot harm God's children. Jesus said to the apostles:

- I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:18-20).

It is interesting to notice that Jesus promise that, "nothing shall hurt you," was given immediately after he had said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," as those that are sealed here is mentioned immediately after John sees the vision of the star falling from heaven. It is very possible this is deliberately so, since it does give us some understanding of what type of danger the faithful are sealed and protected from. As we look back in history it, is clear that Jesus did not promise his disciples' total freedom from all danger, pain, and death, since he also said:

- You will be hated by all for my name's sake, but the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Matt. 10:22) (Mark 13:13) (Luke 21:17).

Pain and death may be encountered, but no real spiritual harm or permanent hurt can come upon the faithful in Christ. Those whose hope and trust is in Christ have a joy which no pain, danger or threat can take away, which is that their names are written in heaven. (Luke. 10:20). For those who are heaven bound, death has no sting and the grave no victory. Those who know God's love and grace in Christ meet famine, peril and sword and in the face of these are more than conquerors. After Peter told the disciples that they had been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for them, he then went onto say:

- By God's power you are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, ⁶but now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:5-7).

These verses make it very clear that when Jesus told his disciples, "nothing shall hurt you," he did not have in mind worldly afflictions, troubles and hardships, but salvation, meaning nothing (no plague, persecution or sorrow etc.), in this world can take away the salvation of those who hold fast to their faith in Christ and endure to the end. The apostle Paul expressed the same truth with the following words:

- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35-39).

Since the way of those in Christ is through persecution, tribulation, famine and war it is most unlikely that they are sealed from a literal plague, and far more likely that this sealing is one that secures them in Christ and in their salvation.

Torment them for five months: (v5) could only hurt those of the antichristian world for five months, but not kill them, this could carry the following two ideas:

1. The time of these locusts is limited, and embraces events that though not generally fatal, do cause great misery, desolation and unhappiness, such as a financial collapse, an epidemic disease or afflictions of grief and suffering caused by chemical warfare, overwhelming, poverty or controlling and harsh oppression, which could all be compared to locust bringing the land to waste and ruin and the painful sting of a scorpion.
2. Though they may kill many they could not totally-destroy their enemy or the nation they were warig against fully out of existence. They may kill, harm and hurt great nations and empires, but never utterly wipe the nation, a people, a race or empire itself from the face of the earth so that they were no more.

People will Seek Death and will Not Find It.

- **Revelation 9:6:** And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

People will seek death and will not find it and long to die, but death will flee from them, signifying that the horror and terror, suffering and grief during the time of these locusts will be so bad and painful people will feel that death would be better than living. It does not mean people will try to suicide, but find they cannot die, since this would mean they are immortal, but that their suffering, grief and pain is so great they would prefer death to survival. Nuclear war, chemical warfare or some type of plague or even a global financial money collapse would cause such a despairing and hopeless a state of mind. The language used here is applicable to what occurs in all ages and in all lands. It refers to a state where the distress is so great that people would consider death a relief, and where they anxiously look to the time when they may be released from their sufferings by death. When it is said that "they would seek death," it does not imply that they themselves would take any positive measures to end their sufferings such as suicide, but only that they desire death to end their pain and sorrows. In every generation, there has always been prisoners in cells and dungeons; people languishing on sickbeds of pain, others suffering extreme hunger in times of great famine and poverty and many in mental and emotional times of hopelessness and disappointed affections who are looking forward to death as a relief from their agony, misery and torment. Death will be regarded as a sweet relief from the tormenting trials of life, people will not only greatly desire death, but also, should it come to them embrace it as a welcome deliverer. As much as they strongly desire to die, they cannot take their own life, and it is in this sense that death flees from them. Their suffering and pain whatever it maybe is not terminal so they continue in their suffering wishing death would take them. People of old age suffering terminal illness and extreme pain not only see death as a friend, but long for it to deliver them from their suffering. The following verse show that this is exactly how Job felt:

- Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, ²¹who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures. (Job 3:20-21).

The expression, "people will seek death and will not find it," in the context of this chapter refers to an age of terror, fear and dread that cause such extreme hardship, grief, pain and sorrow that those suffering such terrors long for death. There have been times in history in which people have longed for death, such times are aptly called reigns of terror.

REVELATION 9:7-8

Locusts like Horses, Hair like Woman's and Teeth like Lions.

- **Revelation 9:7-8:** In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth.

Horses prepared for battle: (v7) signify great and numerous warriors and soldiers prepared to go to war. Many authors have observed that the head of a locust resembles that of a horse and that the hard shell or scales of the locust head have the appearance of armour it is for this reason that the Italians call them cavalette, meaning, little horses.

Heads like crowns of gold: (v7) the antennae and the rugged elevation in the middle of the thorax of the locust have been imagined resembling a crown. The crowns signify that the swarms of locust have great, powerful and rich conquerors and rulers with great dominion leading them.

Faces like human faces (faces were as men in KJV): (v7) firstly, signifying they are not some form of demonic entity, but humans, and secondly, that they are rough shaven, strong, fierce, warlike warriors in contrast to woman having smooth, soft and tender faces.

Hair like women's hair: (v8) maybe signifying strength as Samson long hair did, or perhaps that their king appeared charming and harmless and spoke with enticing, deceptive words when he made his appearance to the masses.

Teeth like lions' teeth: (v8) Joel in the following verse describes a nation with the teeth of a lion:

- A nation has come up against my land, powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness. (Joel 1:6).

The nation that came up against God's land was Babylon the expression, "teeth like lions' teeth," means Babylon's armies devour and destroy everything in their path. A lioness hunts for food, so in this context the expression, "fangs like a lioness," symbolize a hunter hunting for spoil, (riches and treasures). Babylon pillaged the wealth and riches from Jerusalem and God's temple. Daniel in his prophecy picture Rome as a nation with iron teeth, Rome conquered most of the known world, so iron teeth symbolize fierce strength and the power to devour anything that stands in the path of whoever the beast with the iron teeth symbolizes.

REVELATION 9:9

They had Breastplates of Iron and Wings like the Noise of Chariots.

- **Revelation 9:9:** they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.

Breastplates of iron: (v8) locusts have a hard shell or skin, which has been called their armour, the symbolism here is that the army they signify is enormously strong and appears to be almost invincible.

Wings like the noise of many chariots: (v9) the following nations in Scripture are pictured as having wings:

- Assyria is pictured as having wings that will carry its armies over the land of Israel.
- Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is pictured as a great eagle with great wings and Babylon as a lion with eagle wings.
- Greece is pictured as a great leopard with four wings.

In the context of John's vision, the wings symbolize swiftness and can refer to something that carries the army and its warriors into battle, and carries them to the uttermost parts of the earth, while the chariots signify weapons of war and in today's world, missiles, fighter jets and weapons of mass destruction.

REVELATION 9:10

Stings like Scorpions, and Power to Hurt for Five Months.

- **Revelation 9:10:** They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.

Tails and stings like scorpions: (v10) and the power to hurt people is in their tails, tails speak of all the nations aligned to the head nation, it could figuratively be said that the tail nations are the legs of the beasts' head and body. The sting is in their tails means that the power specially to go to war of the head nation is in the nations that are in league with it.

Power to hurt for five months: (v10) signifying they go to battle for a limited time and though they hurt and kill many they do not destroy (i.e., kill or wipe out) the entire nation or enemy. (Also see v5) (above).

REVELATION 9:11

The King, the Angel of the Bottomless pit, Abaddon and Apollyon.

- **Revelation 9:11:** They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

A king over them named Abaddon, and Apollyon: (v11) Abaddon in Hebrew means a destroying angel and carries the idea of perishing and destruction, while Apollyon in Greek means a destroyer (i.e. Satan) and carries the idea of destroying and to fully perish and die. The king over them is described as the angel of the bottomless pit whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. The following verses show that in Scripture the name Abaddon embraces destruction, death and the grave:

- Sheol (Hebrew for grave) is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering. (Job 26:6).

No covering, means no one in the grave is hidden from the eyes of God.

- Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man. (Proverbs 27:20).
- Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man! (Prov. 15:11).

The idea is that the king or ruler (named Apollyon) not only has absolute control over these symbolical locusts, and inspires and assembles a great movement, but also carries the idea that his rule will end in widespread apostasy and desolation and utter-destruction and ruin. The two most prominent examples of this king named Apollyon, which signifies a destroyer is:

1. The pope of Rome, who has great influence over the kings of the earth and by his widespread deception has been the cause of leading millions away from the true path to salvation, which makes him to be the king of the western locusts.
2. Mohammed is believed to be the great prophet of God and is not only exalted in faith and worship above Moses and all other prophets of the Bible, but also above the Lord Jesus Christ which makes him to be the king of the eastern locusts. By wars he brought many kingdoms, countries, cities, and towns to ruin and by deceptive and serpent like ways and artful methods influenced the mind of men and women worldwide to embrace a religion contrary to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

However, though these are great examples of the one that rises-up out of the bottomless pit the ultimate and final man named Apollyon who Paul called, the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-4) (an antichrist) (1 John 2:22), will arise in the latter days with far greater influence, power and hostility toward God's people.

Come up from the bottomless pit: (v11) carries the idea that the head of these nations and their armies will be aggressively hostile and fiercely ruthless (symbolized by a scorpion's sting) toward God, toward Christ and toward his people, but the end of his rule will ultimately bring widespread destruction, suffering, grief and death.

NOTE: it should be mentioned here, the final world ruler and his global empire in the eyes of the world will appear as an angel of light, he will speak with charm, authority skilful oratory, and appear to have answers that will solve much of the world's problems. He will be motivated by the spirit of humanism, meaning the well-being of mankind and the planet,

which is not only a good thing, but also fulfils Christ second commandment, "love your neighbour as yourself." But, in the hands of the of the man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-4) (an antichrist) (1 John 2:22), it is evil, because he will not only deny Christ, but will also be hostile toward all who openly confess him and proclaim the Gospel. In the eyes of the antichristian world he will appear as a saviour, so much so that they adore him and give their heart and mind over to him. It is only from heavens viewpoint that he is spoken of as arising up out of the bottomless pit, because he will be hostile toward God, toward Christ and toward his people.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET AND SECOND WOE

REVELATION 9:13

A Voice says, "Release Four Angels at the Euphrates."

- **Revelation 9:13:** Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God.

The golden altar: (v13) this voice from the golden altar is not from the altar of burnt offering, which was outside the temple that was covered with brass, but the altar of incense inside the temple that was covered with gold and called the golden altar. This altar was a figure of the intercession of Christ; for it was on this altar incense was offered, which signified the prayers of the faithful received by Christ and offered to God. This altar was:

- Constructed of acacia wood, which is incorruptible and of long duration, signifying the perpetuity of Christ's intercession.
- Covered with gold which expresses the glory and excellency of Christ.
- Its shape was foursquare, as is the city of the new Jerusalem, and shows that Christ's intercession avails for all his people in the four parts (north, south, east and west) of the world.
- On its four corners were four horns, which generally signify strength and power, but may also represent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, or the Gospel sent into the four parts of the world, which is the strength and power of God unto salvation.

As, a whole the altar symbolises the fulness of Jesus intercession before God, for all his people, in the four corners of the earth, as well as Christ's power to protect and defend them, and to scatter and destroy his and their enemies. It is said to be before God, in a visionary way, as the altar of incense was before the vail, and the mercy seat, and by the ark of the testimony, suggesting that the one and only Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ continually appears in the presence of God for all the faithful.

The four horns of the golden altar before God: (v13) even though the scene John sees is laid in heaven, the words, "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God," is an allusion to the earthly temple, which was designed to be in many respects a symbol of heaven. This idea often occurs in the Scriptures. The golden altar stood in the holy place, between the table of show-bread and the golden candlestick.

- Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness.
²For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. (Heb. 9:1-2).

The four horns were at each corner of the altar (Exod. 30:2-3) made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold (called the golden altar), in contrast to the altar for sacrifice, which was made of stone and outside the temple. When it is said that this was before God, the meaning is, that it was

directly before or in front of the symbol (i.e., the golden altar of incense) of God's Divine Presence in the Most Holy Place. The earthly image in the vision of John, is seen not on earth, but in heaven and the voice appears to come from the very presence of God.

The number four: four expresses world-wide extension (i.e., north south east and west). The words, "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar," maybe an answer to the martyrs' cry when the fifth seal was opened for the avenging of their blood from this altar (Rev. 6:9-10) or to the cry from the four corners of the altar symbolising the prayerful cry of the faithful from the four corners of the world, often symbolised as incense ascending to God and bringing down His fiery judgments. The voice is said to have proceeded from the golden altar, is an allusion to the following:

- You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. ²A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth. It shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And you shall make a molding of gold around it. (Exod. 30:1-3).

It was here that God received the prayers of His people and the voice from this altar may signify the judgments that are about to come, in answer to the prayers of the martyrs crying to him for vengeance (Rev. 6:9-10), and in answer to the prayers of all the faithful from the four corners of the world.

REVELATION 9:14

A Voice says, "Release Four Angels Bound at the River Euphrates."

- **Revelation 9:14:** saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

14

NOTICE: these four angels symbolise a mighty army and had been prepared for this event, see (v15-16).

The sixth angel: (v14) blows his trumpet, John is seeing this in vision so of course it cannot be literally interpreted. The meaning is, that the effect of blowing the trumpet would be the same as if angels that had been bound should be suddenly loosed to go forth over the earth bringing to pass some enormous judgment of God which is here symbolized by the dramatic action of a powerful angel blowing a trumpet.

The four angels: (v14) it is a common principal in Scripture to represent major events as occurring under the ministry of angels. The general meaning here is, that in, the vicinity of the river Euphrates there were mighty powers which had been held in check, which were now to be let loose upon the world. These four angelic angels are ministers of God's judgments going forth, assembling an army of horsemen (symbolising an army with powerful weapons of war) going throughout the four quarters of the earth, to slay a third of the world's population. The brunt of the visitation will be on Palestine. These are not the four angels John saw in chapter seven:

- I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. (Rev. 7:1).

These four angels of chapter seven are standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back natural disasters from causing great upheaval on earth or restraining hostile nations from afflicting harm and causing havoc (most likely both). Unlike these four angels of chapter seven now in focus are bound at the great river Euphrates, and now being released to to kill a third of mankind. (v15). Supernatural angels are God's ministers and servants to bring about His will, however, verse sixteen shows us that these angels signify a great army:

- The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. (Rev. 9:16).

Some commentators suppose this army to be the Turks since they dwelt on the other side the river Euphrates, and passed over it and destroyed the eastern empire, but it is more likely the army refers to a great army that arises in the latter days, however, the Turks may be seen as a prelude to this mighty army. The army is called angels, because of its great might, force, power and strength which would certainly be true of an army today equipped with modern day weapons of mass destruction.

The four angels of God's judgment: (v14) have been bound by the power of God at Babylon the great city built along the great river Euphrates (v12), until the appointed time. The ancient visible city of Babylon was overthrown by Cyrus king of Media Persia. In the book of Isaiah, it is written:

- God took Cyrus by the right hand to subdue nations and kings and to open doors before him. (Isaiah 44:28).
- God called Cyrus His anointed shepherd, to fulfil His purpose, saying, "Jerusalem shall be built and the foundation of the temple will be laid." (Isaiah 45:1).
- For the sake of God's chosen servant Israel, the LORD equipped Cyrus and took him by his right hand to level the exalted places (referring to the empire of Babylon), and give him the treasures of darkness so he would know that it is the God of Israel, who calls him by his name and Israel would know from the rising of the sun and from the west, He is the LORD their God, and that there is no other. (Isaiah 45:2-6).
- The wealth of Egypt and Cush and the Sabeans, men of stature will come to Cyrus and follow him and bow down to him confessing, "Surely God is in you, and there is no other god besides Him." (Isaiah 45:14).

15

Keeping this in mind and knowing that God has another who He calls His anointed shepherd who He also took by the right hand and who will return in glory to destroy the Babylon spoken of in the following verses:

- Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, for in a single hour God's judgment has come. (Revelation 18:1-2) (Rev. 18:9-10).
- Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! ¹⁷For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off ¹⁸and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning. (Rev. 18:16-18).
- A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more. (Revelation 18:21).
- For in Babylon was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth. (Rev. 18:24).
- After these events, John heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, rejoice over the great city Babylon, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her! (Rev. 18:20).

Though the events of the seals, trumpets and woes may have partial fulfillment in the past through the Romans, the Turks and others that followed. When the verses concerning Babylon spoken of here in the book of Revelation are kept in mind it is easy to accept that the ultimate fulfillment the events spoken of in the seals, the trumpets and the woes prophetically speak of events to take place in the later days.

Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates: (v14) to administer the wrath of God upon the Babylonian political system of government; its banking system of oppressive credit and interest; its global trade and commerce and its ungodliness and

wickedness. Whoever these angels may symbolise, something was limiting and hindering them from full achieving their ungodly ambitious goals. There was something which held them, and the forces under them, in check, until they were commanded to go forth as they now are, meaning whatever was restraining them (perhaps religious divisions, civil wars, political upheaval or lack of military might etc.), are now removed.

The great river Euphrates: (v12) commonly called, in the Scriptures, the great river, it is one of the boundaries of the land of Israel (Deut. 11:24). (Joshua 1:4), on the east of Palestine. The language used here naturally denotes that the power referred to under the sixth trumpet would spring up in the East, and that it would have its origin somewhere near the river Euphrates. Those who apply this to the Rome's invasion of Judaea have great difficulty in explaining this since the armies that fought about the destruction of Rome came from the West, and not from the East. The reasonable interpretation is, that there is forces near the Euphrates which are, up to this period, restrained (perhaps, because of religious divisions, or civil wars and political upheaval in the region, but whatever it may be that is restraining them, it will be removed during the space of time this second woe covers, which allows great suffering of various kinds to spread over a considerable portion of the world. It was on the Euphrates river that the great and ancient city of Babylon, the enemy of God's people was situated. The four angels (ministering God's judgment) who are bound at the river Euphrates and are now being released, may, may mean that they are:

- Released from the literal region of the Euphrates river and Babylon.
- Released from the spiritual Babylon (the apostate Church, especially Papal Rome and the latter-day Babylon spoken of in the last chapters of this book.

NOTE: it should not be supposed that the mention of the great river Euphrates limits the events spoken of to that region, but rather be taken to lead us forward to the city of Babylon built upon its river banks and as such point us forward to the Babylon that John saw in a vision and described as:

- A woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. ⁵And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." ⁶And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Revelation 17:3-6).

This Babylon symbolises global false religion especially that of Papal Rome and the global secular world government whose power will not be limited to the Middle East. Though this battle may start in the region of the Euphrates it will not be contain to that region only, but affect the entire world.

REVELATION 9:15-16

Four Angels, Release Mounted Troops to Kill a Third of Mankind.

- **Revelation 9:15-16:** So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.

Had been prepared, meaning they were made ready and stood in a state of readiness to carry out the work which they had been prepared to do and it is now the appointed time for these four angels who had this mighty army under restraint to remove every obstacle that is limiting them from moving forward to achieve the purpose they had be prepared for. This verse could be read in the following two ways:

1. The angels are heavenly angels that had been prepared to release the great army of troops for this appointed time.
2. The angels are not heavenly angels but signify a great army of troops that God by His eternal foreknowledge knew would arise at this specific time or that He prepared to arise at this time.

Following are the two different interpretations amongst commentators concerning the expression, "the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, day, month, and year."

1. The loosing of the angels would take place at a definite period. The exact, year, month, day and hour were known. There is an unknown specific period, at which the sleeping powers of God's wrath will wake and begin to pour out the judgments of God's wrath upon earth without restraint, that have been withheld until this specific time.
2. The hour, day, month, and the year," means that the angels were not only prepared for the commencement of such a period, but were also prepared for the full duration of the period indicated by the hour, the day, the month, and the year, meaning that they were made ready for the continuance of the full length that this woe period covers.

Those who hold this view see it as being in harmony with the first woe (v5), where the time is specified as, "five months." Others feel this would be too short a time for such a great catastrophe and world changing event since the space of time would only cover around eighteen months. However, a global money crash, chemical or nuclear warfare, a global plague or virous would all have the potential to change the world in a very short time, some even overnight. Added to this these angels have been prepared for this very event, so when they are released, no preparation time is needed, since they are ready to go. When the angels of judgment are loosed and tempest released worldly governments, kings and rulers of nations and countries will fall and the corrupt house of false religion will collapse and the time of testing will prove those of true faith. These events or similar events can rapidly follow each other, especially if this space of time is very near the return of Christ. The only ones who will be happy during such a time will be those who are ready and looking forward to the hour of the Lord's return in glory.

To kill a third of mankind: (v15) when the immense host that is restrained in the region of the Euphrates river is loosed desolation will spread over a third part of the world. This is not to be understood in a literal sense; but rather that the desolation would be so widespread that it would seem to embrace a third of the world. It carries the idea of a great part of the earth's population being killed by these numerous armies. The way in which these angels are to kill a third part of mankind is by warfare, symbolised by horses and chariots prepared for battle (v7-8) with an enormously powerful and evil king over them named Apollyon. (v11), an immense and enormously powerful army of warriors on horses that will be so widespread and devastating it will bring ruin and destruction to a large part of the human-race. (v16-18).

NOTE: the number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand (v16), does not need to be taken literally, but rather as a number that symbolises an enormously powerful army, much like America, China, Russia and various other countries have today.

REVELATION 9:17

Horses Heads as Lions and their Riders wore Breastplates of Fire.

- **Revelation 9:17:** And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the colour of fire and of sapphire (jacinth in KJV) and of sulphur (brimstone in KJV), and the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulphur (brimstone in KJV) came out of their mouths.

Breastplates: refer to the armour of iron soldiers wore to go to battle, covering their chest and waist, which after being polished (as it was the custom to do) would not only appear from a distance in the light of the shining sun like flashing fire, but also be dazzling to the eyes.

Fire and of sapphire and of sulphur (brimstone in KJV): (v17) the riders of the horses wore breastplates the colour of fire and sapphire (jacinth in KJV) and of sulphur (brimstone in KJV). Brimstone: comes from the Greek word (*theion and eidos*) it means sulphur-like, (i.e. sulphurous) and carries the idea of flashing and in prophetic Scripture symbolizes God's wrath and destruction. Sapphire stone (jacinth in KJV): (v17) different varieties of the jacinth stone come in the following variety of colours, ruby red, blue, grey, black and pinkish orange. The colour of the jacinth stone can be various colours, white, orange, pink, violet (bluish-purple) and yellow. Nowadays, jacinth is considered, to be golden to red-brown and reddish blue or deep purple. Since John is seeing this enormous army of thousands of warriors all wearing armour the many various brilliant colours of this stone maybe how John saw the massive army with the sun reflecting from the thousands of soldiers highly polished armour, such a sight would not only be spectacular to the eyes, but also dazzling with various colours from the reflection of the shining armour. The colours red, yellow and orange may also symbolise the flames of fire, while the colours grey, black, bluish-purple and deep purple may symbolise the smoke rising-up from the battle. This would be especially true of a modern-day battle were weapons of mass destruction are used.

The heads of the horses were like lions' heads: (v17) lions' heads, symbolise power, fear and strength. Horses carry their armed rider into the battle, so they symbolise any type of vehicle that carries weapons into the battle such as chariots, catapults, siege towers, battering rams used during sieges and cannons etc., or modern-day tanks, warplanes, warships and missiles etc.

Fire smoke and sulphur came out of the horse's mouth: (v17) this would not only symbolise the fury, ferocity, fierceness, savagery, rage, intensity and severity of the battle, but also the utter destruction, annihilation and devastation. All these symbols combine to picture an enormously powerful, destructive and mighty army. It is a fitting description that could be applied to any army of a powerful nation such as Assyria, Babylon, Rome, but in the context of Johns vision applies to a might army that will arise-up in the latter days.

REVELATION 9:18-19

By Fire, Smoke and Sulphur a Third of Mankind is Killed.

- **Revelation 9:18-19:** By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. 19For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound.

It may be said that the power of a scorpion and a wasp is in its tail for their defence, but not of horses as their tails naturally have no power. In the same way that we never think of horses having power in their tails, it is not necessary, to suppose that the interpretation literally refers to the tails of the horses any more than it is necessary to suppose that the smoke, fire, and brimstone literally proceeded from their mouths. It is almost certain that these things appeared to John in the vision as he describes them, but since they do not align with what is natural and plain it is to be understood that they are not to be taken literally, but as symbols of things to come. Isaiah uses a similar expression to, "tails are like serpents with heads," in the following verse:

- The elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail; (Isaiah 9:15).

The most likely scenario of this vision of Johns is that the events refer to that space of time very near to the Lord's return in glory and to the false prophet (the beast with the horns like a lamb), speaking as the dragon, who by lying miracles deceives the nations.

The third part of mankind: (v18) of the sea and of the rivers, etc. We are not to suppose that this is to be taken literally, but that it carries the idea of a great part of the earth's population will be killed by this powerful army. By these three plagues were the third part of mankind slain, referring to, the fire, the smoke and the brimstone, which together all symbolise war and destruction, extreme grief and pain, devastation and sorrow, annihilation and ruin. The body of the horse symbolises the powerful and strong army, while the mouth and tail that is likened to serpents that wound, symbolise powerful leaders of great authority driven by prideful selfish ambition, having vast influence over great and powerful nations and by authoritative skilful oratory and deceitful speeches entices the nations to send their enormously powerful armies into war.

Tails in prophetic Scripture: (v18) when spoken of symbolically usually applies to the weaker nations aligned with the king or head of the nation leading the battle, when tails are likened to serpents it carries the idea that the heads of these nations and the nations themselves are corrupt and shrewdly, cunningly and deviously deceitful and by lies lead many into and unjust war (i.e., motivated from prideful selfish greed for power and one's own gain, in contrast to defending its citizens) and to destruction and death. When the case in focus is religion the tails symbolically refer to ministers and heads of churches and the churches aligned with their religious organisation or denomination and when likened to serpents it carries the idea that the heads of these churches and religious denominations and organisations are prideful hypocritical ministers who deliberately distort God's word and especially the Gospel of Christ for their own selfish-gain, and advantage (i.e., worldly riches, fame, power and importance) and lead their followers to destruction by their cunningly devised and deviously deceitful teachings instead of leading them to salvation and eternal life. In the same way that Israel's Old Testament kings by their corrupt behaviour and refusal to heed Gods word bought God's judgment, condemnation and wrath upon Jerusalem and their false prophets lead the nation of Israel into Babylonian captivity for seventy years and in the same way the religious heads of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) bought God's judgment, condemnation and wrath upon Jerusalem and lead the nation of Israel to destruction rather than to Christ, the latter days corrupt and hypocritical religious leaders and corrupt prideful secular rulers will bring God's wrath upon the earth.

REVELATION 9:20-21

The Rest of Mankind Did Not Repent of their Murders and Idols.

- **Revelation 9:20-21:** The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Even after all these plagues and fearful and dreadful judgments the rest of mankind, of the antichristian world continues in their ungodliness, idolatries, wickedness, wars and violence. The words, "the works of their hands," refers to the craftsmen who make the idols and the words, "which cannot see or hear or walk," is cited from the following Psalm:

- Their (the nations) idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. ⁵They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. ⁶They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. ⁷They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. ⁸Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them. (Psalm 115:4-8).

They become like them means they become spiritually blind, cannot speak any wisdom or truth, cannot receive or perceive the true word of God, lack mercy and compassion cannot walk on the right path or proclaim the true messages of God, especially the Gospel, and make all who follow them like themselves destined for destruction. All, of the words spoken of in these verses continue even today through the Moslem faith, the papist Church of Rome and all others who proclaim a false and distorted Gospel. These verses make the following four points clear:

1. It is certain the remaining survivors felt great sorrow and heart wrenching grief, but their grief was for themselves and not because they had any sense of wrongdoing or sin toward God, since everything continues from generation to generation as it always has.
2. The plagues were God's judgments, and afflictions designed to bring about repentance.
3. Disasters, wars, violence and death etc., should bring mankind to perceive the frailty and mortality of human life and consider their eternal fate.
4. No matter how great troubles come upon earth the growth of sin will continue to grow and increase until Christ returns in glory.

There is no need to limit these plagues to the non-Christian world only or narrow them to a specific space of time. One of the greatest signs of the coming doom is seen when the global world has strayed so far away from the love of God and His ways that it has lost the power to hate what dishonours Him and offends the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore lost the power to repent, which always leads to moral decay.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
