

THE REVELATION

Hell on Earth – Part 2

LOOK UP! CHRIST IS COMING SOON! HALLELUJAH!

As the sixth angel blew his trumpet a very different sorrow was loosed on the earth. It seems to be the result, however, of the previous affliction. That is, it shows us what the effect on the world will be when Satan-worship becomes prevalent everywhere in what was once called Christendom. It will bring about a tremendous conflict, setting nation against nation and man against man, until the third part of men will be destroyed. Thank the Lord that we who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned.

Romans 8:1 (ESV) ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

“Not guilty; let him go free.” What would those words mean to you if you were on death row? The fact is that the whole human race is on death row, justly condemned for repeatedly breaking God’s holy law. Without Jesus we would have no hope at all. But thank God! He has declared us not guilty and has offered us freedom from sin and power to do his will. However death is coming to those who do not accept Christ. Let’s look on those who find themselves living in hell on earth.

Read Revelation 9:16-17 (ESV) ¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number. ¹⁷ And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads of the horses were like lions’ heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths.

In John's day, this number of mounted troops in an army was inconceivable, but today there are countries and alliances that could easily amass this many soldiers. It is numbered at 200 million. China and India and Japan could easily put that many in the field tomorrow. Are these 200 million human beings? They could be but, some believe that this is the invasion by the demon world, which is a further result of Satan's opening the door of the shaft of the bottomless pit. The following description of these horsemen further confirms this fact.

And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth (a semiprecious stone the color of orange), and brimstone which lies on the shore of the Dead Sea and can burst into flame when earthquakes release hot gases from the earth’s interior : and the heads of the horses were as the

heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. This invasion of demons no matter whether they are man or beast are a huge army, led by the four demons, will be sent out to destroy one-third of the earth's population.

Read Revelation 9:18-19 (ESV) ¹⁸ *By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths.* ¹⁹ *For 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.*

Prior verses depicted an army numbering two hundred million, unleashed along with four specially-prepared angels. Some see John's description, including references to fire and sulfur coming from their mouths as an attempt to describe modern warfare coming from a man who'd never seen anything more advanced than catapults and giant crossbows. Others prefer to interpret this as a more supernatural or literally demonic force. John reports in this verse that the fire, smoke, and sulfur from the horses' mouths kills one third of mankind. Combined with the earlier death of one fourth of humanity, the Tribulation has so far halved earth's population.

The idea that literal smoke and fire could be used as weapons by an army is not farfetched. Smoke inhalation and fire can kill, and so can the fumes of burning sulfur. This result is reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord rained on them sulfur and fire. All the residents of those cities were destroyed except Lot, and his two daughters. **2 Peter 2:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.* A similar fate awaits unbelievers in the Tribulation, when fire, smoke, and sulfur issues forth from the invading army's horses' mouths.

Some suggest that the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments will have no impact on those who come to faith in Christ after the rapture. The locust-like army from earlier in this chapter was explicitly told not to harm believers. Those who think God will spare believers from these events point to the protection of God's people in the land of Goshen when God unleashed the plagues on Egypt. One would think that the combination of five months of torment and then death (from fire, smoke, and brimstone) would bring men and women to their knees in repentance; but such is not the case. Consider the sins that men and women will be committing:

Read Revelation 9:20-21 (ESV) ²⁰ *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,* ²¹ *nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

A great deal of 'religion' will be practiced at this time, but it will be false religion. Yes, just as there are mega churches today it will be the same during the Great Tribulation. People will worship the works of their own hands, which could well include the buildings they construct, the

machines they make, and the cities they build, as well as their idols. Yet these people will continue to reject the true God and worship Satan and idols!

Murder and *theft* will also be common in those days. So will various kinds of *sexual immorality*. The word translated 'sorcery' is the Greek word *pharmakia*, which means the use of drugs. Drugs are often used in pagan religious rites and demon worship. As we see the expansion of today's "drug culture," we have no problem envisioning a whole society given over to these demonic practices.

It will be an age of lawlessness with "every man doing that which is right in his own eyes" (see **Judges 21:25**). But God is working out His plan; and neither the sins of mankind nor the schemes of Satan will hinder Him from accomplishing His will.

We have come now to the midpoint of the Tribulation, a time during which some important events must take place. Antichrist began his career as a peacemaker and a special friend to Israel; but now, his true character will be revealed. He will become a peace-breaker and a persecutor of the people of God.

Read Revelation 10:1-4 (ESV) ¹ Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ² He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³ and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴ And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down."

Chapter 10 is the pause between the sixth and seventh trumpets. It is also a passage that finds much debate. For your information: There has been definite disagreement among outstanding and fundamental Bible expositors as to the identity of the mighty angel. I will give you my version of the mighty angel.

This angel has some of the characteristics that belong especially to the Lord Jesus Christ. John had seen and heard a mighty angel, and the same Greek word is here translated mighty.

We first saw the rainbow around the throne of God; now it sits like a crown on the head of this messenger. The rainbow was God's sign to mankind that He would never again destroy the world with a flood. Even in wrath, God remembers His mercy. Whoever this angel is, he has the authority of God's throne given to him.

God is often identified with clouds. God led Israel by a glorious cloud, and dark clouds covered Sinai when the Law was given. When God appeared to Moses, it was in a cloud of glory. A cloud received Jesus when He ascended to heaven; and, when He returns, it will be with clouds. This being could well be our Lord Jesus Christ, appearing to John as a kingly angel. Jesus often

appeared in the Old Testament as *the Angel of the Lord*. This was a temporary manifestation for a special purpose, not a permanent incarnation.

Two other characteristics would suggest identifying the angel as Jesus Christ: the book in his hand and the awesome posture that he assumed. The little book contains the rest of the prophetic message that John will deliver. Since our Lord was the only One worthy to take the scroll and break the seals (*Rev. 5:5*), it might well be concluded that He is the only One worthy to give His servant the rest of the message.

Read Revelation 10:5-7 (ESV) ⁵ *And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven* ⁶ *and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay,* ⁷ *but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.*

This is one of the places that people argue about concerning whether or not this angel is Jesus. The disagreement came when angel swore an oath. Some believe that God would not swear.

If this angel is our Lord Jesus Christ, why would He take an oath? In order to affirm the solemnity and certainty of the words spoken. God put Himself "under oath" when He made His covenant with Abraham and when He declared His Son to be High Priest. He also took an oath when He promised David that the Christ would come from his family.

The emphasis here is on God the Creator. Various judgments have already been felt by the heavens, the earth, and the sea; and more judgments are to come. The word that is translated "time" actually means "delay." God has been delaying His judgments so that lost sinners will have time to repent; now, however, He will accelerate His judgments and accomplish His purposes.

Recall that the martyred saints in heaven were concerned about God's seeming delay in avenging their deaths. *How long, O Lord, how long?* God's seeming delay in fulfilling His promises has given the scoffers opportunity to deny God's Word and question His sincerity. God's Word is true and His timing, perfect. This means comfort to saints—but judgment to sinners.

We will stop here in the vision waiting to see what the sacred secret will turn out to be.