

**DAY
4****Revelation 9:1-12**

This section describes the 5th trumpet and the 1st woe. John provides more descriptive details of the locusts than any other creature in Revelation.

The best way to interpret these verses is to see them as a worst nightmare description of demonic power. John uses the Old Testament theme of invading locusts as the way to describe this demonic oppression of humanity. (See Joel 2:1-11, 1:4; Exodus 10:12-15 - one of the plagues on Egypt; and Ezekiel 38-39 for the Gog-Magog reference; also Rev. 20:8.) To rightly interpret Revelation, Old Testament images and themes are vital.

(9:1) A fallen star refers either to an evil angel or a sinful human leader. Jesus describes Satan in this way (Luke 10:18). Extra biblical Jewish literature does as well.

(9:2) The Abyss is the realm of restrained evil (Luke 8:31). The only other place in the Bible where Abyss is used is Revelation, 7 times.

(9:3-6) In all these verses, any power and authority the demonic have is a delegated power. Jesus is the one who has the keys of death and Hades, not Satan. The locust beings have limits to their freedom and power (5 months only, the lifecycle of a locust, not allowed to kill - only torment, and they cannot hurt God's people who are sealed). Jesus alone is KING.

(9:5, 10) The key Greek word is *basanizo*. It is used 3 times in v. 5 and once in v. 10. English translations use torture or agony, but the best meaning is torment. They torment people emotionally and spiritually, with anxiety, despair, depression, grief, and fear (see Exodus 12:30).

(9:7-10) John describes "super-sized" locusts (vast in number) with scorpion-level power to harm. Every phrase describes a part of a locust, in exaggerated-intensified terms. And "like human faces" gives a sense of the demonic being.

(9:11) These are the Greek and Hebrew words for destroyer. That is what Satan does - destroys God's people and God's creation. Satan will soon have a much greater role in Revelation.

(9:12) The 5th trumpet has sounded; the 1st woe is over.

While you are sealed by God, you can still give the devil a foothold to torment you. Look at the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-20 for how you can stand firm against the schemes of the Destroyer. And pray for those who are vulnerable to the demonic, that they would find salvation in Christ.

**DAY
5****Revelation 9:13-21**

The 6th trumpet sounds for the 6th woe. SEVEN times in Revelation, John talks about woes. In 9:12 the first woe is described as past. 9:13 starts the 2nd woe. It will be defined as past in 11:14. This 2nd woe is an intensification of the 1st woe. Now, more than affliction, death happens.

While there are certainly historic possibilities in all of chapter 9 about the barbarian hordes to the north (that would invade Rome), I believe the best interpretation continues to be that of seeing these verses as more demonic affliction and destruction. The mouth of the Euphrates River was the frequent symbol for the northern border (see Isaiah 5:26-31, 7:20, 8:7-8; Jeremiah 1:14-16, 4:5-8, and all of Jeremiah 46; Ezekiel 38:1-6). Once again, John creatively combines and enhances Old Testament themes and images to describe the end.

(9:14-15) 4 more evil angels, kept in bounds, until the hour and day that God determines (God alone knows the hour and day. God is sovereign, evil is NOT.)

(9:16) The exact phrase is double myriad of myriads, or double 10,000 x 10,000. This is an unimaginable number. 10,000 = a myriad and, as such, is beyond understanding. This double myriad x myriad is meant to overwhelm. John indicates this - "I heard it!" Evil is overwhelming.

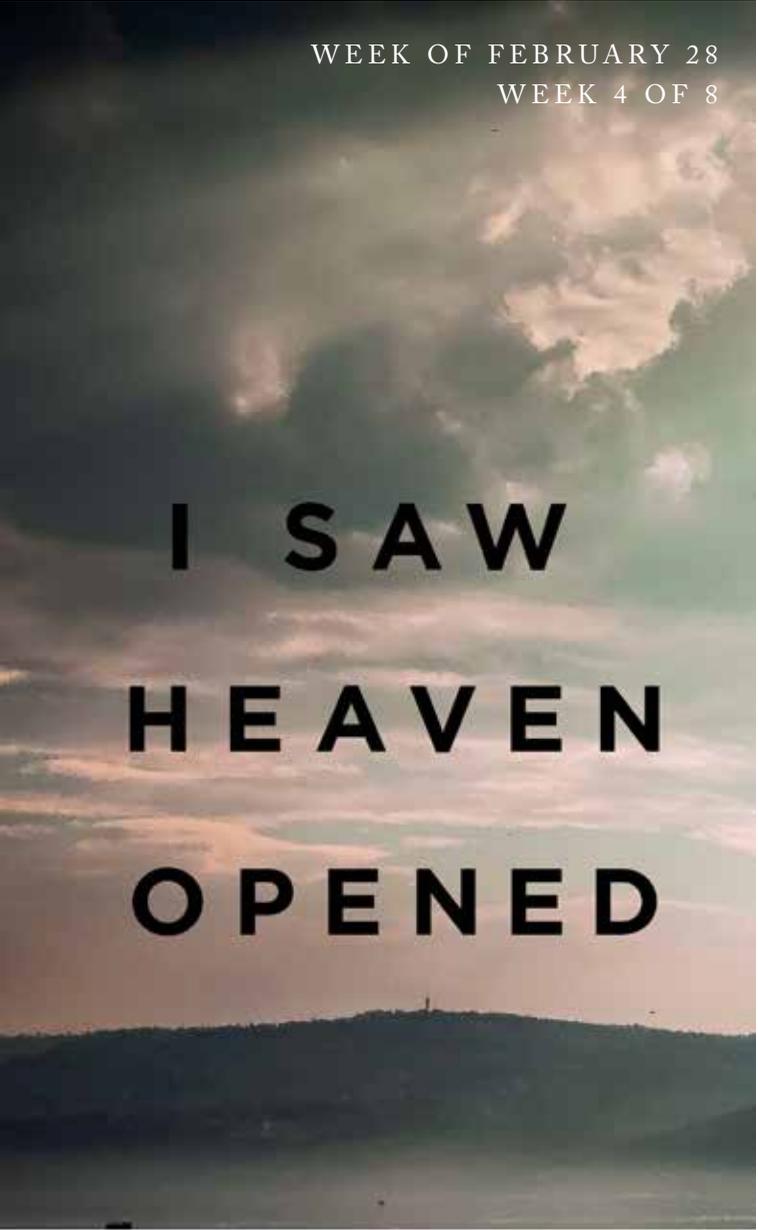
(9:17-18) The locusts have become mounted horses with faces like lions. Another intensification. Fiery red, dark blue/smoke, yellow/sulfur are the signs of judgment (see Genesis 19:24, 28; Deut. 29:23; Isaiah 34:3-16; Ezekiel 38:22). This is also the judgment on Sodom (see 11:18).

(9:19-21) The plagues have been warning and judgment against human evil. Romans 1:18-32 is a longer description of these verses.

It is a tragic indictment on the power of sin and evil. Just like Pharaoh hardened his heart, that is what happens here. While 1/3 are said to die, the rest who live do not repent of their deeds, do not stop worshipping demons and idols, and do not repent of specific evils. Revelation does not sanitize the nature of sin/evil, nor does it minimize the judgment of God on unrepentant sin.

Christians must learn to see sin the way God sees sin. God hates sin. God hates what sin does to the people God loves. Because God is just, holy, and righteous, he cannot ignore unrepentant sin and evil. This should cause us to have great concern and a missional heart for the fallen world. We are not meant to stand apart condemning the world. We are to be faithful and true witnesses of forgiveness to those who repent. Pray for your non-Christian friends.

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 28
WEEK 4 OF 8



I SAW
HEAVEN
OPENED

Sermon: Worship and Witness



**DAY
1**

The Big Purpose of Revelation: Faithful Followers of Jesus

2 Timothy 3:16 reminds us that all Scripture is inspired and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness, and equipping us for every good work God has for us to do. That is EXACTLY what God does through Revelation.

As the first century advanced, the writings of the Apostles added more encouragements to faithful enduring and persevering, because times were becoming harder for the church. By the time of Revelation it was very hard and about to get much worse. Trials and tribulations were already underway, and more were coming.

There is an important distinction that is often missed. Revelation tells Christians they are spared from “wrath and judgment.” Christians are NOT spared from trials and tribulations. In Acts 14:21-22 Paul is strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith by saying, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

As the Lamb of God, suffered and slain for redemption, Jesus is the faithful witness to the nature and purposes of God. God is a God of sacrificial, redeeming love. Jesus came to do just that. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). The foolishness of the cross is the wisdom and power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5).

Revelation reveals the followers of Jesus to be faithful witnesses by the example of their own faithful and obedient commitment to Jesus, even (maybe especially) through suffering with and for Jesus. This is the way we “overcome the world.” Not through escape, but through trust and faith that participates in the way of Jesus. This is not an easy message at all. Revelation is full of faithful witnesses who suffered and, through their suffering, became victorious. Be alert to these passages.

And pray for strength, trust, faith, endurance, perseverance... and yes, pray for protection as well.

**DAY
2**

Revelation 7

This chapter is an interlude. The first 6 seals were opened in Revelation 6. The 7th will be opened in 8:1. John provides an interlude several times in Revelation. Salvation and victory are interspersed with the descriptions of judgment on earth.

(7:1) Notice the 4 angels, 4 corners of the earth, and 4 winds. This is a vision for the entire world.

(7:2-8) The first group to be sealed is the 144,000. Once again, not the literal number, but 12 x 12 x 100, which indicate fullness and perfection. It refers to the group known as all the elect and the remnant of Israel (the focus of Romans 9-11).

On the sealing of God’s people, see Ezekiel 9, and on the eschatological list of tribes, see Ezekiel 48, and notice the reference to the New City. Revelation trivia note: The Old Testament has 18 different lists of the 12 tribes, and John’s list does not match any Old Testament list.

The sealing has reference to the Passover (Exodus 12), when the sign of blood was the protection from judgment. Also see Ephesians 1:13-14 on the sealing all Christians have that show we belong to God.

(7:9-16) This is the second group described with 4 words. They are the entire collection of those saved. Notice the worldwide scope. They have come from the 4 corners of the earth. They are washed in the blood of the Lamb, which is their salvation. See Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 118:19-27; John 12:13. They are Christians from throughout the tribulation in all history. This is a cosmic picture of salvation.

- Worship and praise to God and the Lamb is central to vv. 9-16.
- Angels, elders, 4 living creatures, multitudes - all worship.
- (7:12) Notice the 7 attributes ascribed to God. 4x in Revelation John provides such lists (also see Psalm 29:1-2; 96:7-8).
- (7:15-17) These verses have 9 descriptions of the glory of the saints in heaven, with the final feature pointing to Rev. 21:4.

Once again, use the language of this chapter to shape your own prayers and praise. This is the hope of glory you have sealed in Christ.

**DAY
3**

Revelation 8

(8:1-5) The 7th seal is opened and there is silence in heaven. Notice that the scroll disappears and is not read. First, a word about angels. Jewish angelology had 7 archangels, so John may have that in mind. These angels wait for prayers to be answered.

There are lessons on prayer: (1) prayer matters, (2) all the prayers of all the saints, (3) God takes these prayers seriously (30 minutes of silence), (4) God waits to respond to prayer according to his timing, (5) incense is added to the prayers (could be purifying the prayers), (6) it is hurled to the earth, meaning the answer of God to the prayers, (7) The 4 signs of God’s presence in v. 5 recall God’s presence on Mt. Sinai with the trumpets (Exodus 19:14-19; Isaiah 29:6). The trumpets are ready to sound (Joshua 6 for Jericho and the 7 trumpets).

(8:6-12) The first 4 trumpets sound. There is a good deal of symbolic overlap with the plagues poured on Egypt. It is a word of judgment on evil, but for the purpose of fostering repentance. The scope of judgement is 1/3, indicating partial judgment (see 2 Peter 3:9).

(8:7) This could allude to the most serious volcanic eruption of that era, Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD (see Exodus 9:23-26).

(8:8-9) See Exodus 7:17-21.

(8:10-11) Complex imagery. It could refer to the fall of the world powers (Isaiah 14:12-15). Wormwood is found ONLY here in the Bible. Jeremiah 9:15 is another reference.

(8:12) Symbolically, darkness refers to the removal of God’s blessing and the experience of judgment (see Exodus 10:21-23).

The spiritual reality is that God will judge sin and that judgment will be painful, but like the plagues on Egypt, they are designed to turn hearts back to God.

(8:13) The eagle is a sign of God’s judgment (Jeremiah 4:13; 48:40; 49:22; Hosea 8:1). The eagle also symbolized the military and spiritual power of the Roman legions. That an eagle is crying “woe, woe, woe” (threefold woe - utmost level) reveals that Rome’s power is unable to stand against God’s judgment.

We should be sober, humbled, and in awe of God’s judgment on evil. God is answering the anguished prayers of his people who have suffered through all time. But our task is to be missional and point people to the saving grace of the Lamb.