

in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt. 20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Initial Questions 9:13-21

1. Where is the river Euphrates located?
2. The river Euphrates is the Eastern boundary of what Empire?
3. Where did John get the exact number of the armies of horse-men which he gives in vs. 16?
4. How did the rest of mankind respond to the devastation of the plagues - vs. 20?
5. What spiritual condition of mankind does this section of scripture reveal?
6. What are some of the relationships between the tragedies which come upon mankind and his willingness to repent?

The Sixth Trumpet Blast or the Second Woe Chapter 9:13-21

Verse 13

"And the sixth angel trumpeted" and John heard "one voice" speak to the sixth angel. What did he say?"

Verse 14

The angel was authorized to "loose (*luson* - 1st aor. active, imperative - commanded - to release at once) the four angels having been found at the great river Euphrates." (See Genesis 15:18 for extent of the hand of promise). Beyond the Euphrates, to the east, lay the great Empires of The Assyrians and Babylonians (The great river is also mentioned in 16:12). The flooding waters of the Euphrates is symbolic of the judgment of God (see Isaiah 8:5-8; Jeremiah 17:13).

Verse 15

God's control over the universe is again declared by John. The having been prepared (*hetoimasmenei* - perfect, passive

voice - participle - the preparation of the angels was both complete and performed by someone else other than the angels themselves) angels "for the specific time" in order that (*hina* clause - purpose clause) they should kill one third of mankind" (*men - in the plural*). It must be pointed out that the definite article (the) appears only before hour and not before the words day, month, and year. The significance being that the angels were prepared for God's will and purpose or whenever God choose to reveal His "time." The fifth trumpet revealed terrible torture; the sixth trumpet calls forth death. The situation worsens.

Verse 16

"And the number of the army (literally, bodies of soldiers of the cavalry (*hippikou* - the collective singular noun horsemen) was (not in text) two thousands of thousands; I heard the number of them." John is not claiming that he saw this mighty, monstrous army, but rather that he "heard" the information. The destructive demons were cavalry rather than infantry.

Verse 17

Now John asserts that the following information and imagery was provided in a vision. The hideous imagery which John uses is really self-explanatory. The defensive armour of the riders consists of fire (*purinos* means fire, not fire colored.) The riders are first described then their mounts are pictured as having "heads like (*hōs - as*) heads of lions." They too were equipped with "fire and smoke and sulphur." (See the description of the destruction of the cities of the plains - Genesis 19: 24,28.) Who were the warriors? What is John's source for this imagery? Beckwith (see his work already mentioned, p. 565) is probably correct in stating that the imagery refers to the Parthians. Swete concurs with this identification (see this commentary p. 123). This is a very possible source of John's imagery, but as much of the symbolism found in The Revelation, it cannot be identified with certainty. John thus describes the great invasion from the East. The most serious threat to the law and order in the Roman Empire was the Parthian Empire across the great river Euphrates.

Verse 18

"By (*apo* - from, in the sense of source) these three plagues were a third of men killed." The plagues each have the definite article pointing out the distinct and separate sources of death. "Out of (*ek* - sense of origin) the fire, and the smoke, and the sulphur proceeding) *ekporeuomenou* - present participle constantly proceeding out of their mouths.

Verse 19

Following the imagery of the scorpion, which John used previously, he now states that the "power of the horses is in their mouth and tails". . . . Out of their mouths come fire, etc., and out of their tails comes poison which is deadly for man.

Verse 20

God had permitted these plagues to come upon sinful man in order that he might repent and ultimately be saved. Apparently idolatry had captivated the remaining two thirds of mankind. John says that these "not even repented (after all the torture and death) of the works of their hands, in order that they will not worship demons and idols of gold, and silver, and bronze, and stone, and wooden, which can neither see, hear, nor walk (see Daniel 5:23).

Verse 21

The powers of evil dominated the majority of mankind. All of the tragedy which had been inflicted upon man had not yet brought him to his knees in repentance. If hard times and severe persecution does not cause men to turn to the Lamb of God - What will? God's sole purpose in allowing plagues and death to haunt man was to bring him to a knowledge of his lost condition and need for the saving power of the "Blood of the Lamb. . .; but all was in vain; because "they repented not of their murders, nor their sorceries, nor their fornication, nor out of their thefts." All of these evils are clearly and publically condemned in The Revelation as resulting in Hell for the unrepentant. (See also Galatians 5:16ff.)

Review Questions for Chapter 9

1. Discuss the evil which is described in chp. 9 in view of God's righteousness, justice, mercy, love, and man's need of redemption.

2. Read Exodus 10:14f, and Joel 2:1ff, and then discuss the imagery used in vs. 3.
3. How does man respond to the torment mentioned in vs. 6?
4. What is the "kings" name and what does it mean in vs. 11?
5. What does the use of both the Hebrew and Greek names translated) tell us about the transition from Hebrew to the common language of Greek - vs. 11?
6. What does vs. 15 tell us about the purpose of God and His control over the universe?
7. Discuss the spiritual significance of suffering and its relationship to repentance - vs. 20?
8. Why does God's appeal harden some hearts and brings others to saving knowledge of Christ?

Note: *Stopped Ears!*

Text: Acts 7:57 - "And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and rushed with one mind on him."

When do we stop our ears?

- A. Series of sermons on hundreds of biblical themes.
 1. Baptism.
 2. Planned Giving.
 3. Christian witnessing: Evangelism/Missions
 4. Lord's Supper.
 5. Victorious Christian Living.

Conclusion: When they could not take the Lord's Word anymore, "they stopped their ears." What about *you*?

SECTION 32

Text 10:1-11

And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders

uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

Initial Questions 10:1-11

1. As John was preparing to write, what was he commanded to do?
2. When is the mystery of God to be finished?
3. What does the term *mystery* mean in the New Testament?
4. Were the prophets of vs. 7 Old or New Testament prophets?
5. What does the command to prophecy mean in vs. 11? Does it mean to preach or to fore tell the future, or both?

Preparation for the Seventh Trumpet Blast:
The Vision of the Angel with the Open Booklet
Chapter 10:1-11

Verse 1

The second and third woes (final woe) are yet to come! It will be so terrible that another angel appears to announce it! This angel is the representative of both Christ and God the father. Keep in mind the previous woe, and its torment and death. These did not bring sinful man to repentance! Here we note the first of the intermediate visions before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. How shall the coming devastation affect man and his spiritual relationship to the Lamb of God?

The symbolism leans heavily on that of Daniel 12:7, though it has been modified by John.

We must recall that the opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (see chp. 7). Here the sounding of the seventh trumpet (chp. 11:15) is preceded by a new series of visions (chp. 10:1 to 11:14). John states that "another angel... having been clothed with a cloud." The symbol of the cloud is the vehicle for God's heavenly beings descending and ascending (see Zephaniah 1:15; Daniel 7; Psalms 103, 104; Rev. 1:7, 11:2, 14:14f, and in this verse) "the rainbow on his head" - (see chp. 4:3) probably represents God's faithfulness to His people. God told man in Genesis that the rainbow would be a "sign" that He would never again destroy man by water. The powerful angel's face was as bright as the sun and his feet as pillars of fire. Though this description resembles the description of Christ in chp. 1:15, we cannot say that the strong angel is Christ; because Christ is never called an angel in the Bible.

Verse 2

The strong angel carried "in his hand a little scroll having been opened." The roll mentioned in chp. 5 was on (*epi*) the right hand of the strong angel because it was too large to be concealed in (*en*) the hand. In contrast, here we note the little scroll (*biblaridion* - diminutive form). Swete is probably correct in his assertion that this diminutive shows that the angel's revelation is only a fragment of the total revelation. "And he placed his right foot on the sea and the left on the land."