

## 9. The Fifth and Sixth Angel Sound Their Trumpets and Two Woes Pass (Revelation 9)

As chapter 8 chronicled the effects of man's fall on the destiny of man in the physical world, chapter 9 tells of the destructive nature of lust, sin and death upon man in the spiritual world—all of which occurred because of the fall of man. In addition, an eagle will announce two of three woes.

### The Fifth Angel Sounded His Trumpet (Revelation 9:1-11)

#### **Revelation 9:1**

*9 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss [bottomless pit].*

At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, a star had fallen out of heaven. The past participle, *fallen*, shows an event concluded before the time of the past tense *saw*, which is the time of John's vision. Some variously describe the star that had fallen from the sky to the earth as Satan, Martin Luther, and Mohammed, or some other. We shall take a different meaning. The star was given the key to the pit of the Abyss or a better translation in this case is the King James *bottomless pit*. The key allowed this star control over the abyss. What is this abyss? Isaiah in Isaiah 14:9, 15 spoke of it:

9 Sheol [equivalent to Hades; realm of the dead] from beneath is moved for you to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, even all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit.

Isaiah called this place the uttermost parts of the pit in verse 15.

In Romans 10:6-7, Paul similarly describes the abyss:

6 But the righteousness which is of faith says this, "Say not in your heart, ;'Who shall ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down:) 7 or, 'Who shall descend into the abyss?' (That is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)"

The *where* of the abyss and the pit of the abyss is the darkest world of sin and death contrasted to heaven where there is only righteousness and light. A bottom of the abyss is, therefore, Hades. The *who* of the star or angel is Death. This interpretation agrees with the final words of this sounding trumpet: "They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek (tongue) he has the name Apollyon." This is not Satan, as some would suppose, but the Destroyer who is Death. Yes, Death, who rode the pale horse with Hades following in Revelation 6:8, received the key to the abyss.

From whom and when did Death receive this key? At the instigation of the devil, sin and Death came. The Hebrew letter states the case in Hebrews 2:14-15:

14 Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Again, we turn to the advent of all that inflicts fallen man. After Adam and Eve's so gravely sinned, God allowed Death to reign in Genesis 3:17-19

17 And unto Adam he said, "Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field; 19 in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.

Paul marked the reign of Death from Adam in Romans 5:14:

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.

Hebrews directly connects Death to the devil in Hebrews 2:14-15

14 Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

The *when* of Death having the key to the abyss is when Adam and Eve sinned. From then until now, man lives with the certain expectation of death and fear of death. 1 Corinthians 15:21 concludes: "For since by man (came) death, by man (came) also the resurrection of the dead.

The key (*key* and *keys* only appear 10 times in the Bible) to the abyss is significant because death controlled Hades and the gates of Hades. This, in addition to the verb forms previously studied, places the time of this episode before the time of John's writing of the book and before the death of Christ. Working backwards in time, at the time of these visions Christ, the Lamb, held the keys to this very abyss in Revelation 20:1-2:

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years . . .

During the letters to the churches, the Lamb of God asserted his absolute control over death and Hades in Revelation 3:7:

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens and none shall shut, and that shuts and none opens.

This claim is made the more certain by fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 22:21-23:

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

The Lamb relates this claim directly to his death and resurrection in Revelation 1:18

18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Answering, *when* did the Christ gained control of the abyss, the scripture tells us when Death held and lost the key. In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus promised that the gates of Hades would not prevail against the church:

18 And I also say unto you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

After the resurrection of the Lord, Peter said in Acts 2:29-33:

29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set (one) upon his throne; 31 he foreseeing (this) spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

From the sin of Adam until the resurrection of the Christ, Death controlled the abyss. Although Christ snatched the key of the abyss from the hand of Death, Death still reigns in the abyss. But we find in 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, the days of Death are numbered:

24 Then (comes) the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.

### **Revelation 9:2-6**

*2 And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was said unto them that they*

*should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man. 6 And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death flees from them.*

Smoke from the abyss darkened the sun and the sky; and out of the smoke, locusts came down upon the earth. They received power *like* that of the scorpion of the earth. This entire episode is an extended metaphor; and as such, it parallels the locust plague on Egypt in Exodus 10:4-6:

4 Else, if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring locusts into your border; 5 and they shall cover the face of the earth, so that one shall not be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remains unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which grows for you out of the field; 6 and your houses shall be filled, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians.

As an extended metaphor the present passage is composed of similes and metaphors. Similes, with the use of *like* and *as*, run through the passage. Metaphors imply without the use of *like* or *as*. With the opening of the abyss, darkness prevailed throughout the creation—a spiritual darkness covering all. From without the darkness came locusts with the power like earthly scorpions—the power to sting. This power of scorpions is made clear in Ezekiel 2:6:

6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you, and you do dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

The Christ similarly stated in Luke 10:19-20:

19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. 20 Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

That these were not natural locusts is clear because they could not harm vegetation, which is what natural locusts do. Nor could they harm the earth or sea until God's servants were sealed, according to Revelation 7:2-3:

2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sun's rising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

They could harm "only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads." Christians, when righteous, are immune to the sting of the omnipresent

locusts. The Christ had said that he gave the authority to trample scorpions and overcome all the power of the enemy Luke 10:19:

19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you.

The sting itself does not kill, but tortures, and that for a limited period—five months, the summer when natural locusts thrive. The agony is like that of the sickness of a person when stung—agony to the point of wishing for death. In this metaphor, the meaning is clear: The destroyer with the key to abyss is Death. The locusts are all that is of the world, as explained in 1 John 2:16:

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The sting is sin as explained in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57:

55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law:

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Once Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation, the lust of the flesh and the eye and the pride in one's own life was unleashed. As the locust, the evil desires are everywhere, their sting is sin, and fullness of sin is death. James 1:13-15 tells us:

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no man; 14 but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin; and the sin, when it is fullgrown, brings forth death.

From Adam came physical death and worse spiritual death. Woe heaps upon woe.

### **Revelation 9:7-11**

*7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as (teeth) of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. 10 And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. 11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek (tongue) he has the name Apollyon.*

The metaphor continues with the locust looking like horses prepared for battle. Perhaps their crowns of gold are riches that appeal to the lust of the eye, and their faces like human faces and hair like women make them good to look upon, and their lion's teeth and iron helmets showed the pride of power and might. All of these are a reflection of that statement by John in 1 John 2:16 cited above:

16 For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.

The five months of torment of verse 5 limits the duration of the effect of the scorpions, signaling that the locust will pass away as the summer passes.

The destroyer led them. Many believe the destroyer is Satan. Satan, the dragon, the serpent, or the devil, is never identified as the destroyer. The destroyer is central to the death of the first born in Egypt. Yet, it is the Lord who controls that act and permits the destroyer to enter. In Exodus 12:23, Moses wrote:

23 For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

That the Lord controls the destroyer is repeated twice more. In Exodus 12:12, he said:

23 For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

In Exodus 12:29, Moses wrote:

29 And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.

The Bible does not use the Greek word *Apollyon*, except here. The Hebrew, *Abaddon*, which is transliterated here, appears in several passages all of which identify the destroyer with death. Job put the two together in Job 28:22: “22 Destruction and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor thereof with our ears.’”

Solomon spoke of the two in such a way to include a dominating Lord in Proverbs 15:11:

11 Sheol and Abaddon are before Jehovah: How much more then the hearts of the children of men!

He also used them together in Proverbs 27:20:

20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied; and the eyes of man are never satisfied.

In summary, the Hebrew text is literally *Sheol* and *Adaddon*, which is equivalent to Death and Hades, as frequently used in Revelation. Therefore, the star is the Destroyer, king of the abyss. He was the destroyer who passed through Egypt, and he is Death. The locust hordes of evil desires, the scorpion like sting of every sin, and the spiritual and physical death of all who have lived and will live testify that the Destroyer King is before

us. Only the power of God's seal on our foreheads can save us. Through Christ Jesus, we are free from sin and death. In Romans 8:1-2, Paul wrote:

8 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

All men die a physical death, but to die from the sting of the scorpion is to die everlastingly.

### The Sixth Angel Sounded His Trumpet (Revelation 9:12-11:13)

#### **Revelation 9:12**

*12 The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woës hereafter.*

The first woe is past and we are ready for the second woe. Understanding that the first four trumpet sounds are evil released upon man at his fall taking from man the natural blessings of creation and turning them against him, and that the woes following each of the last three trumpet sounds resulted from changes permitted by God affecting the condition of man. This second woe is worse than the first woe of sin and physical death since it threatens spiritual death for an eternity. We move beyond the certain doom of the bottomless pit for those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads to the everlasting doom of eternal hell fire for those who succumb to the mounted troops of the dragon. The second woe is upon us.

### The Release of the Four Angels Who Are Bound at the Great River Euphrates (Revelation 9:13-16)

#### **Revelation 9:13-16**

*13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel that had one trumpet, "Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. 16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them.*

At the sounding of the sixth angel's trumpet, John heard a voice coming from the horns of the altar. The reading *four horns* is not correct, but if it were, it would not seem to change the meaning. Both the altar of the tabernacle and the altar of the temple had four horns. (Exodus 27:2-3; Ezekiel 43:15). Horns are often associated with entities that have the right to govern and the power to command, Zechariah spoke of these in Zechariah 1:18-21:

18 And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, four horns. 19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, "What are these?" And he answered me,

“These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” 20 And Jehovah showed me four smiths.

21 Then said I, “What come these to do? And he spoke, saying, “These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head; but these are come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

Therefore, *horn* and *horns* are figuratively the strength and power of potentates and ruling entities. In this case, the voice from the horns commands the angel with the sixth trumpet who, in turn has the right to command the angels who were bound at the great river Euphrates. Of the Christ, it was said before his birth by Zechariah, John the Baptist’s father, in Luke 1:68-69:

68 Blessed (be) the Lord, the God of Israel; For he has visited and wrought redemption for his people, 69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of his servant David.

We have already studied the image of the lamb who “had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” Revelation 5:6. Later horns will represent the strength and power of the dragon, the devil, Revelation 12:3; the beast from the sea, Revelation 13:1; and the false prophet, Revelation 13:11.

The four angels bound at the river Euphrates are reserved for a specific time and purpose. God had reserved them for a very hour, day, month, and year. The Euphrates was one of the rivers bordering the Garden of Eden; the river is still with us until this day. The hour, day, month, and year would seem to be that very time when nature turned against man, and death came to him along with evil desires, and sin. The time is set just this side of Eden when with his fall, man took upon himself sins unto death, spiritual death from the face of the Lord, and a casting out into the outer darkness. At that time, released and charging against mankind, were 200 million mounted troops.

The population of the United States at the time of this writing is approximately 295,734,134. The army in this passage was 2/3 the number of this entire country. Think of almost all of America on the march. These troops had the authority to kill a third of mankind.

## The Army of Death, Injury, and Plagues

### **Revelation 9:17-19**

*17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates (as) of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceeded fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt.*

Before considering the horror of the horses and riders, let us ask what could be such a horrible and multitudinous army—an army more in number and more deadly, perhaps, than the horde of locusts of the fifth angel’s trumpet sounding? Ephesians 6:11-13, 16 gives the answer:

11 Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual (hosts) of wickedness in the heavenly (places). 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. . . . 16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil (one).

Therefore, the devil has at his disposal an army of the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. They are rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world. What they are not here, and elsewhere, are physical human forces. Paul states it plainly, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood”—not the Romans, not the Muslims, not any earthly government, unless they themselves fall fool to the devil’s deceptions.

However, these forces of wickedness infiltrate the religions, the businesses, and the governments of the present world. Clergymen, world leaders, and corporate leaders are victims of the Devil’s deceit, just as are we all. Satan’s minions go forth across the world. In 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, Paul describes what all humans are up against,

14 And no marvel; for even Satan fashions himself into an angel of light. 15 It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.

The deceptive nature and work of Satan displays itself with the coming of the lawless one, the beast, and the false prophet in Revelation and the antichrist in the epistles of John. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 describe how Satan will work:

9 (even he), whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

John once again describes his vision in an extended metaphor. The mounted troops, horses with riders, take the color of hell itself—their breastplates were fire and smoke and brimstone. The hottest fire burns a blue flame. The fiery red horse of war appeared in chapter 6:4. John adds fire and smoke. Six references to *brimstone* in the Old Testament relate to the pouring out of the judgment of God. They are all in the manner of God’s destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:24: “24 Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven.”

However, in seven references in Revelation, three are from this passage and describe this horrible army, and four others describe separately the eternal destruction of the beast

and the false prophet (Revelation 19:20), the devil (Revelation 20:10), Death and Hades (Revelation 21:8) and those whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

The three plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone are the plagues of eternal hell fire coming out of the mouths of the horses, killing a third of mankind. The power of this demoniac army is in their mouths and tails. *Out of their mouths came fire* speaks to the point of attack by trial and tribulation as in Revelation 7:14:

14 And I say unto him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are they that come of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

This fire of the Satan will try to will burn up the works of the gospel as in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15

13 each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.

The power of the locust, revealed with the blowing of the fifth trumpet, was the sting of a scorpion—extremely dangerous but not always deadly. Now the power to inflict injury is in the tail with a head like snakes. Christ forecast this danger and spoke of the safety of those having their names written in heaven. Whether scorpion stings or snakebites, believers are safe. In Luke 10:18-20, he said,

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. 20 Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

The death inflicted here is not the death of the earthly body. This death is the second death, eternal hell fire. Christ said in Matthew 10:28,

"28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

This theme of the second death with all its horror, woven through the Revelation is the result of losing our great struggle against the forces of evil. Early on in the book, the Lord promised the followers of the Lamb in Revelation 2:11: "He that overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

In Revelation 20:6, our victory is one over the second death:

6 Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The opposite is also true. Those whose names are not in the book of life receive the second death in Revelation 20:14-15:

And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, (even) the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

Nothing wreaks havoc on mankind like the lives of those caught up in sins that lead to the second death. God warns often of the disastrous results of such overwhelming sin that destroys individuals, families, and nations:

Matthew 12:32: And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.

Hebrews 6:4-6: For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, 6 and (then) fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10:26-27: For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries.

2 Peter 2:20-22: For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. 21 For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.

1 John 5:16-17: If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and (God) will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

From refusing the Holy Spirit to turning our back on the Christ, these devastating situations lead to misery in this life and death in the life to come. Thus, it is so, as Paul said in Romans 6:23, “23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

## Failure to Repent (Revelation 9:20-21)

### **Revelation 9:20-21**

*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.*

As eyewitnesses to the pain and suffering—the plagues of sin—in this life, mankind ought to turn away in horror and to the Lord. The phrase, *still did not repent*, shows that the rest of mankind is still in danger. God demands repentance from the evil works of their hands.

Repenting and repentance is central to the gospel message and to the meaning of Revelation. John the Baptist came preaching repentance in Matthew 3:1-2:

3 And in those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, “2 Repent! For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus also preached in Luke 13:3: “3 I tell you, No! but, except you repent, you shall all in like manner perish.”

Paul preached that even ignorance is no excuse for not repenting in Acts 17:30-31:

30 The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commands men that they should all everywhere repent: 31 inasmuch as he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.

In our predicament there is urgency and dire need to repent as Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:9:

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The clarion call of the angel with the sixth trumpet is that all mankind must repent to escape this second death. The sins themselves are the most odious, yet off repeated.

*Worshiping demons and idols of gold go hand in hand.* Paul was clear on this issue in 1 Corinthians 10:20-21:

But (I say), that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that you should have communion with demons. 21 you cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: you cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons.

Idolatry also led to the most horrendous acts which are described fully by Paul in Romans 1:21-32:

21 because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: 25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.

28 And even as they refused to have God in (their) knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: 32 who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.

*Christ set the standard judging murders and murderers.* In Matthew 5:21-22, during his sermon on the mount, Christ extended murder to anger:

21 You have heard that it was said to them of old time, “You shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.” 22 But I say unto you, that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, “Raca” [*You good for nothing*], shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, “You fool”, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.

According to Christ in John 8:44, the father of sinners, the devil, is a murderer from the beginning:

44 You are of (your) father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

*The purpose of magic arts is to deceive people making them think the sorcerer is someone divine.* Satan sent the lawless one to deceive with counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders, according to 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10:

9 (even he), whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Simon the sorcerer allowed himself to be thought great as only God is great in Acts 8:10:

10 to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is that power of God which is called Great.”

True converts refused to participate in sorcery or magic, and as in Acts 19:18-19:

18 Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. 19 And not a few of them that practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

*Sexual immorality, including such acts as fornication, adultery, and homosexuality, are sins against the mind, body, and soul.* Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:15-16:

15 Know you not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid. 16 Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? For, “The twain,” said he, “shall become one flesh.”

*Thefts are expressly forbidden.* Paul wrote, in Ephesians 4:28:

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul taught emphatically against these great and awful sins:

9 Or know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Near the end of Revelation in Revelation 21:8, John sees the fate of those dead to sin as those who have come to the worst possible condition imaginable—the second death:

8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part (shall be) in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.