

Comments on Revelation 9

The theme from ch. 8 continues with the fifth and sixth angels sounding their trumpets of woe. The seventh angel isn't heard until 11:15.

According to D&C 77:13, the events herein described are to occur in the beginning of the seventh thousand years, as follows:

Q. When are the things to be accomplished, which are written in the 9th chapter of Revelation?

A. They are to be accomplished after the opening of the seventh seal, before the coming of Christ.

1 AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and

there arose 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 there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given 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 he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts [were] like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads [were] as it were crowns like gold, and their faces [were] as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as [the 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 running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power [was] to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, [which is] the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue [is] Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath [his] name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past; [and], behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

v1-12 The wicked of the earth are led by a man who is perdition

(v. 1, 11). The evil man releases a terrible plague of war upon mankind (v. 2-3, 7-10). The plague afflicts all mankind (v. 5-6) except those who are zealous for God (v. 4).

The text is arranged thematically in an A-B-C-C-B-A inverted parallelism based upon subject. The parallelism is intended to provide an interpretive key to the rather obscure set of symbols.

v1 "they key of the bottomless pit", presumably an investment of satanic powers, the powers by which the beast wages war with the saints (cp. 13:5-7) and his assistants perform miracles to deceive the people (cp. 13:11-15).

Presumably this event refers specifically to the second beast joining forces with the first beast, as detailed in 13:11-18. It cannot refer to the rise of the original beast, as the first beast and his followers are assailed with the preceding four soundings/plagues according to the ch. 16 account, cf. 16:2.

v3-10 The text uses symbols drawn from the OT Prophets who described the invading Assyrian armies, which sacked and scattered the northern Ten Tribes of Israel, cf. Joel 1:4-7, Amos 7:1, Nahum 3:15-17, Dan. 11. Here they are apparently used to describe the armies of the beast.

v3 "locusts", Joel compares the invading Assyrian armies as a plague of locusts, cf. Joel 1:4-6, Joel 2:25. The Assyrian hordes were so large they covered and consumed everything, they were unstoppable and insatiable.

v4 "any green thing", the symbolic green plants represent the faithful, the "fruitful", people of the Lord, cp. 7:3, Ps. 1:3, ct. Joel 1:7.

"men which have not the seal of God", i.e., those not sealed in 7:3.

v8 "hair as the hair of women", a symbol drawn from the Gentile barbarians that afflicted Israel early in her history, cf. Deut. 32:42 (see a modern translation, such as the [NAS](#) or [JPS](#), as the KJV doesn't translate verse well).

"teeth were as the teeth of lions", cp. Joel 1:6.

v11 "Abaddon...Apollyon", both of the words mean "Destroyer". The messenger of the bottomless pit is labeled a "Destroyer".

v12 The one woe passed is the fifth angel which has just sounded in the preceding verses. The next two are the sixth (cf. v. 13) and seventh (cf. 11:15) angels.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen [were] two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 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. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails [were] like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

v13-21 The sixth angel sounds (v. 13-15) and another army (v. 16-17) comes up against the army described in v. 3-10, cp. Dan. 11:40-44. And, thus, the slaughter commences (v. 18-19). Despite the terrible trials and conflict, the wicked do not repent of their sin (v. 20-21).

From the reference to the Euphrates, it is safe to assume this army is being symbolically equated with ancient Babylon, through which the Euphrates runs. Ancient Babylon is the nation which conquered Judah and Jerusalem in Ezekiel's time.

v14 "in the great river Euphrates", the IV/JST emends this to "the bottomless pit", similar to v. 1-3. This emendation is curious because the army in v. 3-10 is rhetorically connected with the ancient Assyria. And v. 14-21 is describing another army, which would be connected with Babylon. The reference to the Euphrates in 16:12 is left unchanged. Apparently, Smith's

intent was to convey the idea that both armies were being driven by hell to destruction. Had it been to change the meaning away from the symbolic equation with Babylon he would have changed the 16:12 reference as well.

v15 "four angels", apparently the same four angels referenced in 7:1.

v18 "by these three", i.e., the subsequently referenced "fire...smoke...brimstone".

v20-21 The whole purpose of terrible afflictions such as this is to get people to repent, cf. Lev. 26:40-45. When they fail to repent, the slaughter, misery, and destruction continues.

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