

Date: January 24, 2018
 Title: Exodus Redux – The 3rd Cycle of Seven Trumpets
 Text: Revelation 8, 9
 Theme:

“The unity of John’s book, then, is neither chronological nor arithmetical, but artistic, like that of a musical theme with variations, each variation adding something new to the significance of the whole composition.”¹

“The Exodus of God’s people out of Egypt is ‘the greatest redemptive event in the Old Testament,’ says Don Carson. To let that sink in for a moment, imagine this: If our publishing age is marked by the cross, it is because the cross the shorthand for the death and resurrection of Christ. His cross marks the centerpiece of redemptive history. But before the cross there was the Exodus. And so if the world of publishing today talks about the cross-centered life, and the cross-centered church, it would seem that a fitting analogy would be to perhaps imagine Old Testament era saints to have been inspired to write and publish books on the Exodus-centered life and the Exodus-centered synagogue.”²

How much does that motif impact our handling of this text, this Book? We will explore this in the moments ahead.

“The Biblical book of Exodus describes the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, so it's no surprise that the word has come to refer more generally to any mass departure. The word itself was adopted into English (via Latin) from Greek *Exodos*, which literally means ‘the road out.’ The Greek word was formed by combining the prefix *ex-* and *hodos*, meaning ‘road’ or ‘way.’”³

Introduction:

There is something in boxing that appeals to the human condition. Many people have heard the likes of Joe Louis, Roberto Duran, Jack Dempsey, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Muhammad Ali, Mike Tyson, and Sugar Ray Robinson. When they fought, people took note. The biblical *Story* line and the Book of Revelation is very much like two Titans entering a ring and fighting it out with only one leaving victorious. Throughout the 3rd cycle of seven, you have two Titans battling it out: the seed of the Serpent versus the seed of the Woman. Fortunately, regardless of what it might look like in and between rounds, God wins!

THEME: God comforts His people by reclaiming what is rightfully His as Creator and Redeemer. As He pushes His **Vision** for creating forward, He is reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people. God is throwing the squatters out and destroying the invasive species.

Listen to how F.F. Bruce describes the intent of the Book of Revelation.

“The author, John by name, was at the time exiled on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, and reports a series of visions which symbolically portray the triumph of Christ both in His own

passion and in the sufferings of His people at the hand of His enemies and theirs. The book was written in the days of the Flavian emperors (AD 69-96) **to encourage hard-pressed Christians with the assurance that, notwithstanding the apparent odds against which they had to contend, their victory was not in doubt; Jesus, not Caesar, had been invested by the Almighty with the Sovereignty of the world.**"⁴

How are we to take what we read? Is it literal or defined by its genre? Should we expect the earth to be impacted by the wrath of the Lamb? Should we expect to see demonic activity attacking humanity? Absolutely! But we need not consign this to some distant future, but the encroachment of God into the present. God is right now reclaiming what is rightfully His as Creator and Redeemer and is right now reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people. All of His actions are just. All of creation verifies the veracity of His judgment against the rebellious unbelieving.

THE BIG PICTURE:

1. This is a revelation of God and His work to reclaim what is His by Creation and Redemption.
2. The "Tribulation" is God reclaiming what is His and reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people.
3. The cycles of "7" are the telling and retelling of this *Story*.
4. Each cycle speaks to what has been, is, and will be culminating in the final and fullest action of God is setting things straight at His coming [i.e. Armageddon].
5. Instead of reading it all consecutively, we should read it concurrently.
6. There is sequence, but there are pauses that expand on individual elements within the sequence.
7. The Church is in Tribulation.
8. God's redemptive *Story* is always being retold.
9. God will make good on His promises and fully reclaim all that is His as Creator and Redeemer by reconstituting His Garden for the joy of His people.

Outline:

"There are several parallels between the series of seven seals (Rev. 6:1-8:1) and the series of seven trumpets (8:2-11:19). In each series the first four belong together. In each series the first six do not deal so much with the church as with the unrepentant, unbelieving enemies of Christ and of His Church. And in each case there is a special section about the church between the sixth and the seventh in the series. Rev. 10:1 to 11:14 corresponds to Rev. 7. Both sections cover the entire New Testament age in point of time and must not be thought of as picturing something that slips in somehow and takes place just before the end."⁵

Seven Trumpets	Seven Bowls
1. earth (8:7)	1. earth (16:2)
2 sea (8:8-9)	2. sea (16:3)
3. rivers, springs (8:10-11)	3. rivers, springs (16:4-5)
4. sun, moon, stars (8:12)	4. sun (16:8)
5. pit of the Abyss (9:1)	5. throne of the beast (16:10)
6. river Euphrates (9:13-14)	6. river Euphrates (16:12)
7: lightening, hail (11:15, 19)	7. lightening, hail (16:17, 21)

Kistemaker, New Testament Commentary, page 272

“The trumpets herald great plagues, the worldwide version of the plagues of Egypt at the time when God was making ready to rescue his people from slavery.”⁶

The Exodus Motif and the Book of Revelation

“The controlling motif of Exodus is the revelation of God’s victorious power; the unifying theme is ‘The Lordship of Yahweh.’ It was God who saw the afflictions of his people and heard their cry (2:25; 3:7), who moved to deliver his people (3:6, 16-17), who, by his plagues, overcame the objections of Pharaoh and showed the powerlessness of the gods of Egypt (7:14-11:10). It was God who claimed his people for his own (12:1-13:16), who guided them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (13:21-24), who opened the Red Sea so the people could march across on dry ground (14: 1-30). God was the one who established his covenant with Israel and punished them when they disobeyed (19:1-20:20), who gave the tablets of stone with the basic laws for the life of the people (20:1-17), and gave directions for the building of the tabernacle. He sent the manna from heaven (16:22-30) and opened the rock to provide a spring of water (17: 1-7).”⁷

“Next to God, Moses is the central figure in the Exodus. God raised him up, providentially protected him from the king’s decree of death, called and commissioned him to lead his people out of Egypt, and endued him with power to accomplish his task. Moses’ relationship with God was unique; he was God’s spokesman. Resistance to him was counted as resistance to God. God spoke to others “in a dream” but with Moses “mouth to mouth” (Num. 12:6-8).”⁸

“The theological background for the exodus motif in the vision of the ‘Seven Bowls’ in the book of Revelation is the exodus account in the Hexateuch. The exodus tradition should be seen as a complex motif network that includes a cluster of events: the deliverance of Egypt, preceded by YHWH’s judgment on Egypt; the making of the covenant and building of the sanctuary at Sinai; and the conquest of the Promise Land. Therefore, it could be divided into several thematic components: **deliverance, judgment, covenant, presence of the liberator, and the conquest/inheritance.**”⁹

“Thus the whole exodus tradition, from themes of plagues to the conquest, is comprehended in the vision of the ‘Seven Bowls’ of Rev 15-16 in a creative way that shows to some extent respect

for the chronological order. The author of Revelation weaves the various components of the exodus tradition into his picture. All five themes of the exodus tradition appear in the vision, flexibly reworked with other added elements that are reminiscent of the exodus narrative."¹⁰

The second of the three major symbolic themes is that of *the eschatological exodus*. Since the exodus was the key salvation event in the history of Israel, in which God liberated his people from oppression in Egypt, destroyed their oppressors, made them his own people and led them to theocratic independence in a land of their own, it was naturally the model for prophetic and apocalyptic hopes of another great salvation event in the future. In some Jewish apocalyptic the eschatological intervention of God in which he will finally judge the evil powers and bring definitive salvation to his people was conceived as an eschatological exodus, surpassing the first exodus as eschatology surpasses history. Traces of an interpretation of the saving work of Jesus Christ as bringing about the eschatological exodus can be found in many parts of the New Testament, but it is Revelation that develops the idea most fully.

The central image in this complex is that of Jesus himself as the Passover Lamb (first introduced at 5:6, 9-10). That Revelation's image of the Lamb refers to the lamb sacrificed at the Passover is clear especially from 5:9-10. There it is said that by his blood the Lamb has 'ransomed' a people and made them 'a kingdom and priests serving our God'. The latter phrase echoes the well-known words of the Sinai covenant (Exod. 19:5-6), by which God made the people he had brought out of Egypt his own people. God's liberation of his people from Egypt was often referred to as his ransoming them from slavery to be his own people (e.g. Deut. 7:8; 13:5), and the same image could be used of the new exodus of the future (Isa. 35:10; 51:11). When Revelation treats the blood of the Lamb as the price of redemption, this really goes beyond the role which the blood of the Passover Lamb played in the exodus (cf. Exod. 12:12, 23). Moreover, the Passover Lamb played no role in Jewish expectation of a new exodus. But it is likely that in Revelation 5:6, 9 John alludes not only to the Passover lamb, but also to Isaiah 53:7, where the Suffering Servant is portrayed as a sacrificial lamb. He may well have connected this verse with the new exodus language of Deutero-Isaiah and seen the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 as the Passover lamb of the new exodus. In any case, it is the central role which the death of Jesus played in the Christian understanding of redemption which accounts for the centrality of the Lamb to Revelation's use of the new exodus motif.

In 15:2-4 the Christian martyrs, victorious in heaven, are seen as the people of the new exodus, standing beside a heavenly Red Sea, through which they have passed, and singing a version of the song of praise to God which Moses and the people of Israel sang after their deliverance from Pharaoh at the Red Sea (Exod. 15). Moreover, the plagues which are God's judgment on their enemies in this context (15:1, 5-16:21) are modelled on the plagues of Egypt at the time of the exodus. We have already noticed, in chapter 2 above, that the final judgment of this series is linked to a reminiscence of the Sinai theophany (16:18). Other allusions to the exodus narratives are in 11:6, where the activity of the two witnesses is in part modelled on Moses and the plagues of Egypt, and 11:8, where one of the prophetic names of the great city where the witnesses are martyred is Egypt. Already in 2:14, the false teachers in Pergamum, who are persuading Christians to compromise with paganism, are compared with Balaam, the false prophet who was responsible for the seduction of the Israelites into idolatry, as a result of which they failed to reach the goal of the exodus entry into the promised land.

As with the messianic war, John's use of the new exodus imagery shows that for him the decisive eschatological event has already occurred: the new Passover Lamb has been slaughtered and he has ransomed a people for God. The goal of the new exodus is still to be attained, when Christ's people will reign with him as priests on earth (20:4-6; 22:3-5), attaining their theocratic independence in the promised land. But revelation's new exodus does not consistently follow the sequence of the Old Testament narrative. The imagery is used flexibly – in literal terms, inconsistently – to characterize all three stages of the work of Christ as Revelation portrays it."¹¹

"Nine ways in which the exodus event is echoed by Revelation

Richard Bauckham and James Resseguie say that Revelation portrays an 'eschatological exodus' of a new Israel to a new promised land (the new Jerusalem), where Christ leads his people out of Babylon just as God led his people out of Egypt. Here is the evidence they provide:

1. Jesus is portrayed as a lamb that acts as a ransom (similar to the Passover lamb)
2. Jesus makes his people a kingdom and priests that serve God (Rev. 1.6, 5.10; see Exodus 19.5-6)
3. The ten plagues of the exodus are intentionally echoed by many of the plagues in Revelation.
4. The sealing of the saints in Revelation 7 to protect them from the plagues (see especially Rev. 7.3 and 9.4) is similar to the protection God gave Israel during the Passover, when the last plague hit the Egyptians but did not touch the Jewish people who had the blood on their doorposts.
5. Revelation 10.1, where the angel's legs are described as pillars of fire
6. The two witnesses in chapter 11 have the power to turn water into blood and strike the earth with all kinds of plagues, just as God did through Moses in Egypt (Rev. 11.6). And in Revelation 11.8 Jerusalem is called Egypt.
7. Revelation 15.2-4 is reminiscent of Exodus 15: just as Israel stood by the sea and sang the song of Moses in praise to God after pharaoh's army was destroyed by the red sea, so in Revelation 15.2-4 the people of God stand by a sea in heaven and "sing the song of Moses". In Exodus 15.11 the people sing of God's glorious deeds and wonders, and ask, "Who is like you?" In Revelation 15.2-4 the people sing of God's great and amazing deeds, and ask, "Who will not fear you?"
8. The cosmic phenomena in Revelation 16.18 are reminiscent of those at Mt. Sinai when God appeared there.
9. Revelation 18.4, where a voice from heaven calls out, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues".¹²

"A brief vision of God's heavenly temple, focusing on a golden incense altar, opens a new cycle of seven visions, each of which is introduced by an angelic trumpet blast."¹³

"The first four Trumpets and their results are recorded with brevity; while the last three are set forth in more detail. The four occupy only seven verses; the last three occupy some fifty verses. The first of the four affects the earth; the fourth affects the heavens; while the second and third affect the waters of the earth. Thus all is recorded in perfect order."¹⁴

Revelation 8-9

I. The First Four Trumpets ([Creation] 8:1-13)

“It is greatly to be regretted that this verse should have been prefixed to this chapter. The section of the book with which it is connected is that which goes before, not that which follows.”¹⁵

There is silence in heaven. A realm where worship is unceasing, there is silence. It is the silence of awe.

“Following the ‘interlude’ of the previous chapter, in which reassuring and comforting scenes concerning the saints were seen, **the seventh seal** is now opened. For about a half hour, there is silence in heaven (1). In contrast to all that happened before, the silence must have been striking! Possibly it signifies awe in heaven for what has already been revealed, or for what is about to be revealed. When God acts, those on earth should be in awe (cf. Hab 2:20; Zec 2:13). Should we not expect a similar reaction from His creatures in heaven (Zep 1:7)?”¹⁶

This is the TRIBULATION. This has been, is, and will be until Jesus returns.

“This section of Revelation seems to present the future deliverance of the people of God at the end of history as the final fulfillment of the **exodus pattern**.”

As the first four angels sound their trumpets in turn, the environment in particular is impacted:

A. vv. 1-5 Introduction

“A *golden censer* was a bowl in which incense was burned. The imagery suggests the OT role of the priest.”¹⁷

“The first six trumpets: **God responds to the saints’ prayer** by using angels to execute judgments on the persecuting world, leading up to the last judgment (8:6-9:21).”¹⁸

Remember the Exodus motif. God is mindful of His suffering people and He will correct all injustice against Him and His Seed.

- ²³ “Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and **they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.** ²⁴ **So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** ²⁵ **God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them”** (Exod. 2:23-25).

You are not alone in your suffering. God hears you and will act.

“In verse 3 another angelic personage is introduced as standing before the altar with a golden censer presenting incense and the prayers of the saints before the throne. This is a beautiful picture of the prayers of the saints as seen from heaven. In the Old Testament order the priests would burn incense upon the altar of incense, and the smoke would fill the Temple or the Tabernacle and would then ascend to heaven. Incense was symbolic of worship and prayer and

a reminder that intercession to the Lord has the character of sweet incense. The altar in heaven is referred to seven times in this book (6:9; 8:3a, b, 5; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7). Commentators differ as to whether the altar is the altar of burnt offering or the altar of incense, although the latter is usually preferred."¹⁹

The Temple in the Book of Revelation

The issue is not that of a literal Temple, thus its measurement or occurrence is only a shadow of something more significant. The intent of the shadow is to point to the substance. What does this referencing to the Temple signify?

“So in the New Testament the antitype of these strands regarding the temple emerge in three ways – two big ones and one small one. The first big one is Jesus himself as the ultimate temple. The second big one is the church of Jesus Christ as the temple; that is, it is the meeting place between God and sinners. Here is where God speaks through his temple to the surrounding nations. Being constituted as the church, it becomes the meeting place between God and sinners and, thus, becomes a temple as well. And then in one or two passages only our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. That language is used further there.

And you could track out various further emphases until you come to the book of Revelation. There are temple themes throughout the book that are really quite remarkable. But for lack of time, let me just skip to the last two chapters where you have the final vision of a new heaven and a new earth or again, the vision changes and it is now a vision of the New Jerusalem, and yet this Jerusalem is also a bride. One of the things that apocalyptic literature does is mingle its metaphors. It mixes them together. But what is interesting is that, in the vision of the new Jerusalem, John the seer says, ‘I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb’ (Revelation 21:22).

So once again, you don’t need the edifice because you have God. You have now complete reconciliation. You don’t need a mediating priest. Christ is there. And the new Jerusalem itself is depicted symbolically as perfectly cubical. It is a perfect cube. And there is only one cube in the Old Testament; namely, the Most Holy Place. So you can’t have a temple in the Most Holy Place. All the people of God are in the Most Holy Place. They are in the temple. They are in the presence of the living God. And so now you have really come to something like the garden of Eden, only much better. And so all of these pieces together form a whole tapestry of biblical, theological unpacking that is one of the strands that ties the entire Bible together.”²⁰

B. vv. 6, 7 first trumpet – 1/3 of greenery targeted

The first trumpet - Hail and fire, mingled with blood, are thrown to earth; a third of the trees and all the green grass were burned up (7).²¹

“Here God’s providential rule makes use of human combatants’ military strategy of ruthless defoliation (cf. Deut. 20:129-20) to call rebellious nations to repentance.”²²

Revelation 8-9

C. vv. 8, 9 second trumpet - 1/3 of sea based life killed

The second trumpet - Something like a great burning mountain is thrown into the sea, turning a third of it into blood; a third of the sea creatures died, and a third of the ships were destroyed (8-9).²³

“The imagery echoes Jer. 51:25, 42, where God announced that he would make Babylon, Zion’s destroyer, a ‘burnt mountain’ and cover it with the sea.”²⁴

D. vv. 10, 11 third trumpet - 1/3 of fresh water based life killed

The third trumpet - A great burning star named Wormwood falls on a third of the rivers and springs of water; a third of the waters became wormwood (a bitter wood) and many men died from the bitter water (10-11).²⁵

“*Wormwood* refers to a particularly bitter herb with medicinal value. According to L&N 3.21, “The English term *wormwood* is derived from the use of the plant as a medicine to kill intestinal worms.” This remark about the star’s name is parenthetical in nature.”²⁶

E. vv. 12, 13 fourth trumpet - 1/3 celestial bodies targeted

The fourth trumpet - A third of the sun, moon, and stars are struck, so that a third of them were darkened; thus a third of the day and night did not shine (12).²⁷

Why is there is assault against creation as such? Perhaps it is because the unbelieving have worshipped the creature over the Creator and perhaps it is because God dismisses creation as Creator to show His sovereignty over it. What they worship, God turns to dust!

Why a third? The idea occurs in Revelation 8:7-12; 9:15-18; 12:4.

“John enumerates the three plagues that destroy a third of the human race (v. 15); they are *fire, smoke, and sulfur* discharging from the mouths of devilish monsters. These three natural elements are symbols that represent war, desolation, and destruction.

First, the Old Testament teaches that fire refers to war, for ‘burning a city with fire was a basic principle of ancient total warfare’ (Harold Van Broekhoven Jr. ISBE, 2:305).

Next, the fire of warfare includes the smoke that obscures the light of the sun, pollutes the air, and suffocates every being that has breath. In the Old Testament, smoke is a manifestation of God’s fierce wrath directed against his enemies (Judg. 20:40; 2 Sam. 22:9; Ps. 18:8; Isa. 30:27).

Last, sulfur, also known as brimstone, in Scripture represents God’s punishment of the wicked, as is clearly seen in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24). When deposits of sulfur begin to burn, toxic gasses are released, especially in volcanic eruptions. A combination of hot lava and burning sulfur results in painful agony and death for all those in its destructive path.”²⁸

David Stern, in the *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, offers this balanced approach to the judgments in Revelation: “If these verses in Revelation are to be understood literally, then, since God uses nature to accomplish his purposes, one can imagine asteroids plunging into the earth, other materials from outer space darkening the skies and infecting the water, and heat flashes setting fire to the vegetation; and one can seek scientific explanations for such phenomena. **But if these are graphic but figurative ways of describing God’s judgment and the terror it will evoke, such speculations and researches are irrelevant. There are intelligent, well-informed God-fearing New Testament scholars taking each approach**” (p. 815).²⁹

I see it as “graphic but figurative.”

“Visions of woe initiated by the last three trumpets disclose intensified demonic activity and global violence as the consummation approaches, at which time ‘the kingdom of the world’ will have ‘become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ’ (11:15), and every rebel against his reign will endure eternal condemnation and punishment.”³⁰

“The last three trumpets signify escalating judgments on rebellious humanity as the end approaches.”³¹

“Three things form the subject of this Fifth Trumpet: the fallen Star, the Pit of the Abyss, and the Locusts.”³²

II. The Fifth Trumpet / 1st woe ([Creatures] 9:1-12 [the bottomless pit])

The Locusts from the Pit of the Abyss

A. The Abyss

- “And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into **the deep**” (Luke 8:31).
- “Or, Who shall descend into **the deep**? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)” (Rom. 10:7).
- “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**” (Rev. 9:1).
- “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” (Rev. 9:2).
- “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” (Rev. 9:11).
- “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of **the bottomless pit** shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them” (Rev. 11:7).
- “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of **the bottomless pit**, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” (Rev. 17:8).

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- “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of **the bottomless pit** and a great chain in his hand” (Rev. 20:1).
- “And cast him into **the bottomless pit**, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Rev. 20:3).

“‘Bottomless pit’ is one word in the Greek of the New Testament and is literally the ‘**abyss**,’ which means ‘bottomless, unbounded, the pit, or the immeasurable depth.’ Roman mythology featured a similar place called Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and, especially, as the abode of demons. The bottomless pit of Revelation 9:1-12 holds a unique type of demon. It is also the home of the beast who makes war against the two witnesses (Revelation 11:7-8). At the beginning of the millennial kingdom, the bottomless pit is the place where Satan is bound (Revelation 20:1-3). At the end of the thousand years, Satan is released and promptly leads an unsuccessful revolt against God (Revelation 20:7-10).

The bottomless pit may be associated with a place called **Tartarus**. This Greek word is translated as ‘hell’ and is used only once in Scripture, in 2 Peter 2:4 [**hypox legomenon**]. It refers to the place where ‘angels who sinned’ are reserved in chains of darkness for judgment. The NIV says these angels in Tartarus are held in ‘gloomy dungeons.’ These same angels are also mentioned in Jude 6 as the angels who “abandoned their own home” (cf. Genesis 6:2).

If **Tartarus** is the same as the **Abyss**, then the inhabitants of the bottomless pit are the same angels who sinned and left their first habitation. God uses the bottomless pit as a holding place for the most evil of angels, including Satan himself and those who tried and failed before the Flood to thwart God’s plan to bring the Seed of the woman into the world (Genesis 3:15). These prisoners of the bottomless pit hate humanity and seek to destroy them, but God controls their terror and limits their power.”³³

OT - Sheol / NT - Hades	
Place of Torment	Abraham’s Bosom
Abyss / Tartarus	Paradise

However, because there appears to be movement in and out of the abyss and such movement is not present when speaking of Tartarus, I would suggest the two are not the same, but within the place of torment.

There is a pit from which evil comes. It is a dark place filled with demonic personalities. There is a “king” over this pit named Apollyon. This “king,” however, is under rule. There is another king who rules over this malignant king. He is the “King of kings and Lord of lords.” This king has the keys and opens the pit to allow His purposes to be carried forward.

The one who holds the keys determines, if, when, and how long the inhabitants can leave this pit. Although there is one who rules within the pit, another rules over the pit!

The bottomless pit is presently active. This is the biblical *Story*. The serpent's seed is always assaulting the seed of the woman and that is what we will see retold in the coming chapters.

Compare 9:4 w/ 8:6, 7

Compare 9:6 w/ 8:11; 9:15

9:4 **They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree**, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

8:6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. 7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

9:6 And **in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.**

8:11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and **many men died from the waters**, because they were made bitter.

9:15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, **so that they would kill a third of mankind.**

B. The Locusts

1. Their power (9:3, 10a)

They have the ability and the authority to carry out the will of God.

2. Their commission (9:4, 5, 10b)

To cause harm to the unbelieving inhabitants of earth.

3. Their appearance (9:5b, 10c)

They have the ability and authority to inflict the unbelieving inhabitants of earth.

4. Their structure (9:11)

They have as a king an angel called Apollyon. It is within the same family of words that mean, "Destroy."

The sealing in 9:4 is expanded on in 7:1ff.

III. Sixth trumpet / 2nd woe (9:13-11:14)

Two events are described in the sixth trumpet. Notice the use of “five months” in verse 5. What is the significance of five? Probably nothing. Just as he uses “two hundred million” to express the thought of overwhelming numbers so also with many of the numbers in the Revelation. The number “five” [pente] occurs three times in Revelation (9:5, 10; 17:10).

Notice the phrase “who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year” (9:15). It was in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) Jesus came the first time and it will be in the fullness of time He comes the second time.

Compare 9:5, 6, 20, 21 w/ 6:12-17 – the unbelieving persist in their unbelief. They refuse to become slaves of God. The judgment of God against the unbelieving is just. **They will receive what they deserve.** Currently, we are in the wheat and tares stage (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-40 [Read]), but a day of separation is coming (Matt. 24, 25) when God will bring His people into His presence and the “non-people” will be separated from His presence and thus joy forever.

“Verses 10:1 – 11:14: These verses serve as an interlude between the sixth trumpet and seventh trumpet (11:15). The seals and the bowls also have a brief interlude between their sixth and seventh judgments (7:1-17; 16:15). **God’s intention is to encourage and comfort His people in the midst of the fury and to remind them that He is still sovereign, that He remembers His people, and that they will ultimately be victorious.**”³⁴

“Why does God allow human suffering and death? Why does He allow evil to go unpunished? When will He break the silence and punish the wicked? Have you ever been asked such questions? Have you personally asked any of these questions? This may be the most difficult biblical question to answer this side of eternity. It is the one question that no Christian wants to be asked. After all, many people say they can’t accept a God who stands by and lets evil continue in the world. Even Christians have fallen away from Christ because they couldn’t harmonize the reality of evil and suffering with a God of love [**p.s. as a reminder, remember the two words, ‘reclaiming and reconstituting. This is the answer to the dilemma of evil’.** Yet, for those that are interested, the Bible provides an answer to this dilemma in Revelation 10:1-11. Before we delve into our passage, let’s get our bearings. Revelation 10:1-11:14 is a parenthetical vision. The opening of the seventh seal was preceded by two visions (7:1-8; 11-17), so here, the sounding of the seventh trumpet is preceded by two visions (10:1-11; 11:1-14). **The emphasis shifts temporarily from the outpouring of God’s wrath on unbelievers to the consolation and encouragement of believers.**”³⁵

“Having declared the purpose of the army, John now gives details. Most impressive is the astounding number of the army of horsemen, 200 million, or literally ‘twice ten thousand times ten thousand.’ Because the number ‘ten thousand times ten thousand’ is often used of an innumerable company (cf. 5:11) some have held that this should not be understood as a literal number. Scott does not believe that the army of 200 million should be taken literally:

A literal army consisting of 200 million of cavalry need not be thought of. The main idea in the passage is a vast and overwhelming army, one beyond human computation, and exceeding by far any before witnessed.¹⁹⁵

The Apocalypse of St. John, p. 122. Swete, if living today, would no doubt be astounded to read in *Time* (May 21, 1965, p. 35) that Red China alone claims to have a man-and-woman militia of 200,000,000, exactly the figure of Revelation 9:16."³⁶

- A. The angel and the little book (10)
- B. The two witnesses (11:1-14)
- IV. Seventh trumpet / 3rd woe (11:15ff)
 - A. The Woman and the Dragon (12)
 - B. The Beast from the Sea (13)
 - C. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14)
 - D. A Scene of "Heaven" (15)

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

Revelation 8-9

- ¹ Simon J. Kistemaker, *Revelation*, NTC, p. 266.
- ² <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/exodus-understanding-one-of-the-bible-s-major-themes>
- ³ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exodus>
- ⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* 5, 6.
- ⁵ Luther Poellot, *Revelation*, CCCS, p. 134.
- ⁶ Tom Wright, *Revelation for Everyone*, p. 78.
- ⁷ <http://preachingsource.com/journal/the-new-and-greater-exodus-the-exodus-pattern-in-the-new-testament/>
- ⁸ <http://preachingsource.com/journal/the-new-and-greater-exodus-the-exodus-pattern-in-the-new-testament/>
- ⁹ <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=3010&context=auss>
- ¹⁰ <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=3010&context=auss>
- ¹¹ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology Of The Book Of Revelation*, 71-2.
- ¹² <http://www.revelation.giffmex.org/?p=432> Sources: Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); James Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).
- ¹³ ESV Study Bible on Revelation 8:2-11:18.
- ¹⁴ E.W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation*, p. 305.
- ¹⁵ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Revelation 8:1.
- ¹⁶ http://executableoutlines.com/rev/rev_08.htm
- ¹⁷ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Revelation+8>
- ¹⁸ G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC, p. 472.
- ¹⁹ http://walvoord.com/article/266#P913_389164
- ²⁰ <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/why-we-must-understand-the-temple-in-god-s-plan-today>
- ²¹ http://executableoutlines.com/rev/rev_08.htm
- ²² ESV Study Bible on Revelation 8:6, 7.
- ²³ http://executableoutlines.com/rev/rev_08.htm
- ²⁴ ESV Study Bible on Revelation 8:8-9.
- ²⁵ http://executableoutlines.com/rev/rev_08.htm
- ²⁶ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Revelation+8:10>
- ²⁷ http://executableoutlines.com/rev/rev_08.htm
- ²⁸ Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, p. 299.
- ²⁹ <https://oncedelivered.net/2012/04/27/it-fell-on-a-third-revelation-810-11/>
- ³⁰ ESV Study Bible on Revelation 8:2-11:18.
- ³¹ ESV Study Bible on Revelation 8:13.
- ³² E.W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation*, p. 316.
- ³³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/bottomless-pit.html>
- ³⁴ <http://discoverrevelation.com/Revelation%20Chapter%2010.html>
- ³⁵ <https://bible.org/seriespage/19-bittersweet-book-revelation-101-11>
- ³⁶ <http://walvoord.com/article/267>