

Redemption Church of Bristol
Revelation 8-9 Worksheet

What's the key to understanding Revelation 8-9?

- Beginning with these chapters, John begins to describe plagues and wonders that affect the earth and its inhabitants. The descriptions of the plagues can be disturbing or terrifying at first. But if we read carefully, we see that it is supposed to be good news that these plagues are occurring. The multitude sealed with the Mark of the Lamb are unaffected by these plagues, and their prayers are actually the cause for them occurring. These chapters describe how God is going to use the trumpets to begin to shake the strongholds of evil that exist on earth to persecute God's people.

What are the key symbols and allusions in this passage?

- The Trumpets
 - Trumpets were used to signal holidays and issue battle commands in ancient Israel.
 - Seven trumpets were carried and blown when the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho.
- The Plagues
 - The first four trumpets affect things in the physical realm: earth and plants, sea, rivers and springs, and heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars)
 - This has allusions to the seven day creation story
- The last three trumpets are forewarned by an eagle. The two we see blown in Chapter 9 bring about disturbing supernatural beings who are given permission to bring bodily harm and death to human beings.
 - Abbadon/Apollyon was a location in the Old Testament associated with the Grave (Sheol), and meant a place of destruction. Revelation 9 is the first time in Scripture that Abbadon is personified as an angel.
 - The locusts in Chapter 9 allude to the plague of locusts that will come during the Day of the Lord (Joel 1). The main difference is Joel prophesied normal locusts where Revelation sees the locusts being with human faces and scorpion tails. Many commentators see this as representative of human armies.
 - Four angels - the fact that they are bound suggests they may be fallen angels. The Euphrates brings to mind the region Babylon came from.
 - These beings lead an uncountable army which ride bizarre fire-breathing 'horses'. These images are meant to strike fear and show the futility of standing against such a foe.

Reflection:

- This section ends with the survivors of these horrors refusing to repent of the evil they have done. What causes hardness of heart when there is clear evidence that something is wrong?
 - Where in our lives are we unrepentant and stubborn over our sin?
- What brings you to pray against evil?

Closing Prayer

"Lord, we allow evil to trample us because we know that You alone will avenge. Bring Your justice and peace soon. When we have hardened hearts, lead us away from our stubbornness back into Your arms."