

Revelation, Part 12

Rev 9:12 The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.

The term “woe” is always used in Scripture to reference a great calamity. With the first woe, we saw the release of a great demon army that was imprisoned in the Abyss, or what Bob Thieme called the 1st Demon Attack Army (1DAA). Satan was the agent of release, but God *gave* him the keys to the abyss, implying that God controls everything, even Satan and what he is allowed to do.

The entrance to the Abyss is opened and out comes this cloud of frightful locusts-like somethings. I believe they are an unknown and never before seen form of demonic manifestation that swarms as do locusts. They inflict painful “stings” on those of mankind not sealed for five months. There is enormous pain associated with this demon attack. Even though they may seek death, as relief from the agony, it is denied them and they must endure the pain.

John Walvoord sums up the fifth Trumpet and these demons this way, “With the release of these demons the full character of Satan will be starkly manifested. For the first time in history, all those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior will come under the influence of demon possession and affliction.”

All those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ...

Let’s look at the 2nd Demon Attack Army (2DAA)

Rev 9:13 Then 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 who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great River Euphrates.” 15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and

brimstone. 18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. 20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

A voice from the four horns of the golden altar tells the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” These must be demons because they are said to be “bound” and “released,” plus their actions seen in verse 15 kill $\frac{1}{3}$ of mankind. The word “bound” is a Greek word that is usually translated in some sense of being tied up, literally bound. In a broader sense, it can mean being bound in prison. The word “release,” or “loosed” in some translations, is a Greek word that means to untie. In a broader sense, it means a release from imprisonment. If we take the Greek literally, it suggests these demons are bound perhaps in chains to restrict their movements. The fact that they are bound implies they are physically restricted and suggests they are like those released from the abyss earlier. They are particularly nasty demons, so evil that they had to be bound to prevent them from harming mankind. That also adds some color and intensity to the events of this period to think that the worst of the worst will be allowed to have their way with mankind.

“At” is the Greek *epi*, which means at or about relating to proximity. Some translations have “in” the Euphrates River. It is hard to be dogmatic about exactly where these demons are bound, but it is in the area of the River Euphrates, and there is nothing in the context to suggest this is not literally the River Euphrates. The river does not seem to represent something else in a metaphorical sense, so we have no reason to believe this is anything but the literal Euphrates River. Does this suggest there may be a seventh compartment in the Underworld, one near the Euphrates River?

Rev 9:15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

First, note that these angelic ministers of judgment are under divine control. They are not released until the appropriate time and note it is a “command” to release.

This statement “prepared for the hour and day and month and year” should be viewed not as a period of activity as we saw with the first woe and the five months. Because of the definite article before the word “hour” in Greek, this should be interpreted as, “*The* appointed hour, occurring on *the* appointed day, occurring in *the* appointed month, that occurs in *the* appointed year.” This is a reference to a very specific time point of time in the future.

They kill one-third of mankind! That leaves about 2.8 billion out of 8 billion remaining alive, by my calculations. Pretty soon we will be out of people to kill. These demons are indeed nasty devils! These events probably take place around the middle of the Tribulation in the second half or possibly a little later.

Rev 9:16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

Having declared the purpose of this army “to kill a third of mankind,” John gives details concerning it. He says in verse 16 “Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.” The number he hears is literally “twice ten thousand times ten thousand”. The term “ten thousand times ten thousand” would usually be used to identify an innumerable company, but considering it is specified, a literal interpretation of this number is not out of the question. Note that John did not count them but was told their number, which implies a literal number.

Let’s continue with Revelation 9:17 as John describes this demon army.

Rev 9:17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.

Some argue this may be a description of modern warfare, and these are armored vehicles of some sort that John is seeing and describing using his first-century understanding. From their description and their source in the vicinity of the Euphrates River, the seat of ancient Babylon, and demonic activity, I conclude they are indeed demons, and rather frightful ones at that, and not an attempt by John to describe modern armored vehicles. There is no direct statement of the origin of this army here but later in Revelation 16 we see an invasion from the East.

Rev 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The Euphrates River is the traditional boundary between the Middle East and the far East. There are some dams on the river today for retaining water for irrigation, and the flow of the river has been slowed to almost nothing. The need to dry up the river to allow passage is probably not necessary, as crossing is easily possible in several places. This is probably more symbolic than anything.

Some connect this “army” in Revelation 9 with one seen in chapter 16 being led by the “King of the East”. Are these events in Revelation 16:12 related to Revelation 9:16, or maybe even the same? I believe they are two different events. Those in Revelation 9 involve what are clearly demons released on mankind. The army of the King of the East in Revelation 16 appears to be a human army being drawn into the Battle of Armageddon, which we will look at later. Since the army in chapter 9 is clearly a demonic army and the one in chapter 16 is human, I cannot see how these are two pictures of the same event. This demon army released in chapter 9 is probably being released around the mid-point of the Tribulation or a little later. The armies mentioned in chapter 16 will be taking part in Armageddon near the very end of the Tribulation, some 3 years later. It can be argued that the demon army in chapter 9 is preparing the way for the human army in chapter 16, but I don’t see that either.

Rev 9:18 By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

We have this statement “by these three *plagues*”? The italics in the KJV version signifies the word “plagues” is not in the original text. It is in some earlier manuscripts like the NIV and NASB. So we have just “these three” or “these three plagues,” depending on the translation. But even if the word “plagues” is in the text, what plagues? The word “plague” in Greek means a strike or a wound and can be more broadly interpreted to refer to almost any calamity. The three “plagues” almost certainly refer to the three woes mentioned in verse 13 and expounded in the last three Trumpets. By them, one-third of the population is killed.

Rev 9:19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

Their power is in their mouths and their tails and they have tails like serpents. This must have been a frightful sight for John. Not only was their appearance fearful but the effects of their actions were also.

Rev 9:20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Despite all this, mankind did not repent of all the things God hates. They continued in their resistance to His rule and in rebellion. They continued in their idolatry, murder, sexual immorality, and sorcery. They continued in their evil despite the most profound and frightening things happening to them. Often it takes hardship and calamity to bring us to our knees and make us realize our arrogance and our limitations. At that broken point, we come to the realization we are not what we think we are, rather we are much less. In that broken state, THEN we seek God. But at this point in the Tribulation, even the most severe and extreme calamity does not move these demon-possessed humans to righteousness. They continue in their resistance to God despite every opportunity and ample warning of what is coming.

One final note on these two demon armies: John saw them in his vision, but will those in the Tribulation actually see them or merely experience the effects of their ministries? It is one thing to experience the effects of these two demon armies but to see their frightful appearance is quite another. Considering the theme of the Tribulation, I am thinking these monsters are visible to mankind, especially the lost.

The Little Book

Rev 10:1 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, 7 but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

At the beginning of chapters 10 through 11:14 we have a parenthetical insert. It does not advance the narrative of the events, but it presents other facts that contribute to the total prophetic scene.

In Revelation 10:1 we are introduced to a new personage described as “another mighty angel”. The Greek word translated “another” is *allon* which ordinarily means another of the same kind, an angel similar to the other angels which have been previously introduced. But it seems evident from the content, that this angel is not the seventh angel that will sound the trumpet.

Some take the position this angel is the Lord Jesus Christ based on the description of having a position of great power, coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, rainbow about the head, face like the sun, and feet like pillars of fire. Indeed, in the OT Christ is sometimes seen in His pre-incarnate state as the “Angel of Jehovah”. Though this is plausible, the evidence seems to point to this being a created angel who has been given great power and authority.

This angel is declared to be another mighty angel that “comes down from heaven” and plants his feet on the sea and the earth. There is no other evidence that Christ comes down from Heaven to the earth until the Second Advent, but there are instances where angels are made ministers from God for the punishment of the wicked and protection of the righteous. In Chapter 12 Michael the Archangel is mentioned as contending against the wicked angels and casting them out of heaven. However, there is no clear evidence of who this particular angel is, but he is likely a created angel and probably Michael or at least one with whom has been entrusted great power and responsibility.

John sees him in a most dramatic pose with one foot planted on the sea and the other on the land. The “sea” is probably the Mediterranean and the “land” is Israel. This implies power and authority over the earth. However, this is introductory to what he is holding in his hand — the little book. In Revelation 5 the Lamb had a sealed book (or scroll). A different word is used here. In chapter 5 it was the Greek *biblion*, whereas here it is the diminutive form of that word, *biblaridion*, which translates as “little book”. The contents are not revealed here in Revelation, but they seem to represent the written authority upon which this angel is acting.

As John is beholding this the angel ...

Rev 10:3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

Translated, this says there were seven thundering utterances or speeches; seven things are spoken loudly like peels of thunder. John heard them and understood them and was about to write down what he heard, but he was warned not to do that but to seal it up. Elsewhere John is told to write what he sees and pass it on, but not here. God has revealed much, but there are secrets He has chosen not to reveal to mankind at this time.

Rev 10:5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer

The fact that this angel standing on the sea and the earth raises his hand to heaven and swears by “Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it” imply that God is greater than he is. Thus he is not Jesus Christ but is like the passage said, “another angel”.

He proclaims by the authority of God “that there should be delay no longer”. The KJV says there shall be “time no longer” which has led to the bad interpretation that he is saying that time ceases. The word for time is *chronos* from which we get the English words for a watch, chronograph, and the passage of time, chronology. The word is usually translated in the sense of a period of time or a succession of chronological events. It does not mean time will cease as is implied in the KJV translation. The NKJV and NIV capture the meaning better with “that there should be delay no longer” and “There will be no more delay!” The idea is that the end is now consummated, the time has run out and what must follow will now follow. What will not be delayed is explained by the statement found in verse 7.

Rev 10:7 but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

This statement, “In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel (trumpet), when he is about to sound” seems to refer not to a specific day. Though the word for “days” is usually used that way, as in the period between sunrise and sunset. It can also be used as a general reference, in this case, “time” or a “period of time”. “When he is about to sound....” “When” is a Greek word that refers to a future point in time. “Sound” is a Greek word for “blow the trumpet”. We might have something like this, “In that future period of time (the days) when the trumpet is to be sounded when he is ready to blow the trumpet....”

“The mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets,” or “What God has declared to the prophets will be complete — in the future — when the seventh angel is about to blow his trumpet.” Or this way, “When the seventh angel blows his trumpet the mystery God previously revealed to his prophets is then complete.”

We have seen the word “mystery” used in the context of Church Age doctrines as a previously unrevealed truth that is now revealed, but what is this “mystery of God”? Many solutions have been suggested, as we shall see shortly. God has been revealing His plan bit by bit through the prophets, and this relates mainly to the coming Kingdom in the context of Israel. I believe the reference to “prophets” here is to OT prophets. The context of Revelation primarily relates to Israel, so it is logical the prophets spoken of would be OT prophets. If we go over to Revelation 11:15 we get some support for this view.

Rev 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

The Seventh Trumpet relates to the revealing of the promised Kingdom when all earthly kingdoms will be brought under the rule of the King of Kings. That seems to support the conclusion that the mystery must be

related to the revealing of all that is associated with the coming Kingdom. What does that include?

Here are the list of interpretations presented by various commentators but I think Pastor Dave McPherson got it right when he concluded the “mystery” to be revealed included all of these.

- The prophets were given details of the promised Kingdom. That is an easy one.
- Throughout the major and minor prophets, we see references to Israel’s promised Kingdom. Each had a piece of the mystery.
- It also includes the fulfillment of the promise that the seed of the woman would triumph over the serpent.
- It also includes the blessing of the Gentiles.
- The establishment of the rule of the Son of Man forever. The Davidic dynasty.
- The fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel, Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and the New Covenant to Israel.
- And lastly — the mystery of why God allowed Satan and mankind to be so rebellious and have so much freedom of action before final judgment. The “why” of the Angelic Conflict.

Regarding that last point about the Angelic Conflict, we have previously speculated about the reason behind it.

- Why was man created?
- Knowing man would fall once created, why did God create man or allow the fall?
- The fallen angels and Satan have been judged, but their sentences have not been carried out.
- Why was all this allowed to happen if God has the power to stop it?
- What is the purpose behind it all?

It is difficult to doctrinally establish the answer to this final mystery without a great deal of speculation. We have tidbits of information that seem to point to a conclusion that what we call the Angelic Conflict is Satan’s appeal trial, and all this is to prove that God’s judgment upon Satan and the fallen angels were just.

I think this passage may be saying when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet all this will become obvious. What was previously unknown truth before will be fully revealed then.

Rev 10:8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and the earth.”

John is directed to go and take the little book from the hand of the angel.

Rev 10:9 So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

So John goes up to the angel and asks for the book. He is then instructed to eat it but warned it will turn his stomach. It will be sweet in the mouth but bitter in the stomach.

Rev 10:10 Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

John took the book and ate it, and just as promised, it tasted like honey but it immediately turned his stomach. We have similar experiences in Ezekiel and Jeremiah

Ezekiel 3:1 Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.” 2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. 3 And He said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness. 4 Then He said to me: “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them...

Jer 15:15 O Lord, You know;
Remember me and visit me,
And take vengeance for me on my persecutors.
In Your enduring patience, do not take me away.
Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke.
16 Your words were found, and I ate them,
And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;
For I am called by Your name,
O Lord God of hosts.

- 17 I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers,
Nor did I rejoice;
I sat alone because of Your hand,
For You have filled me with indignation.
- 18 Why is my pain perpetual
And my wound incurable,
Which refuses to be healed?
Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream,
As waters that fail?

What does this incident mean? Though no interpretation was given to John, it is evident that in partaking of the book he was appropriating what the book states. The Little Book seems to symbolize the Word of God and divine revelation in general, for John was told to deliver the Word faithfully. To John, the Word of God was indeed sweet with its revelation of the grace of God and its many precious promises that belong to believers. As such it sharply contrasted with his circumstances on Patmos Island. David stated, “The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey than honey from the comb” (Ps. 19:9–10).

While it is sweet to the taste and its words bring us joy as honey might, it can bring bitterness. The word translated as “bitter” can be a literal bitterness as a sour stomach or bitter taste. It can also refer to an attitude, as in to be made bitter, or more accurately in this context, to suffer bitterness. The Word of God may be sweet to the soul of those who consume it and live its truths, but they can expect bitterness directed towards them and suffering as a result. This is what Jeremiah was lamenting about. He spoke of his persecutors and having suffered rebuke, but God’s Words were like honey.

John partook of the little book, an act of obedience, and consumed the Word of God, now he suffers “bitterness” for his testimony for Christ. At the time of writing, he is exiled to the Island of Patmos as an old man and made to work hard. He is suffering for his testimony, probably as the pastor of the church at Ephesus where his teachings about the one true God were a threat to the claimed divinity of the Roman emperors. Other religions were allowed to worship as long as they recognized the Roman emperor as the ultimate divine authority. While the Word of God does

teach Christians to recognize earthly authority as from God, we are not to worship them as gods. Though the Word is sweet to believers, it will be bitter to unbelievers when it brings divine judgment on them, thus the “bitterness” represents not only John’s conditions on Patmos but also the judgments on mankind being revealed to him.

Rev 10:11 And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

John is reminded that he is tasked with delivering the Word of God given to him, which he did eat, and bitter as the message may be, delivering it to the peoples of the world “Many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.” He remained faithful to his charge despite the persecution he suffered.

This image was created by AI, and I think it does a pretty good job of capturing what someone enduring the Tribulation might look like. The *Daily Mail* article this came from can be found here. <https://tinyurl.com/254br6re>

