

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 352 – December 18th – Revelation 9:1-21

Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation

Morris, Leon	<i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969
Mounce, Robert H	<i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977
Peterson, Eugene H	<i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991
Witherington, Ben	<i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003

Verse 1

Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ εἶδον ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκῶτα εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς τοῦ φρέατος τῆς ἀβύσσου·

πεμπτος, η, ον fifth
πεπτωκῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, m acc s & n
nom/acc pl πιπτω fall

Cf. Is 14:12; Lk 10:18.

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι
κλεῖς, εἶδος f key
φρεαρ, ατος n well, pit
ἀβυσσος, ου f abyss, world of dead

Cf. 20:1. Many see this as a reference to a fallen angel or Satan, but Mounce argues that it is more likely to be a divine agent, an angel sent to open up the abyss.

Verse 2

καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρέατος ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης, καὶ ἐσκοτώθη ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ ἀήρ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ τοῦ φρέατος.

ἀνοιγω open
ἀνέβη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀναβαινω go
up, ascend

καπνος, ου m smoke
καμινος, ου f furnace
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἐσκοτώθη see 8:12
ἥλιος, ου m see 8:12
ἀηρ, ερος m air, space

Verse 3

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ ἐξῆλθον ἀκρίδες εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς ἐξουσία ὡς ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς.

ἀκρις, ιδος f locust, grasshopper

Cf. Ex. 10:1-20; Joel 1:2-2:11.

ἐξουσια, ας f authority, power
σκορπιος, ου m scorpion

Verse 4

καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐταῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσουσιν τὸν χόρτον τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ πᾶν χλωρὸν οὐδὲ πᾶν δένδρον, εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οἵτινες οὐκ ἔχουσι τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων.

ἐρρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λεγω

This and ἐδόθη in the previous and following verse "suggests that this plague, even though demonic, is under the sovereign control of God." Mounce.

ἀδικεω harm
χορτος, ου m grass, vegetation, shoot
χλωρος, α, ον green, green plant
δένδρον, ου n tree
οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι
who, which
σφραγίς, ιδος f seal, mark
μετωπον, ου n forehead

"As the children of Israel were protected from the plagues which fell upon the Egyptians (Ex 8:22; 9:4,26; 10:23; 11:7), so also will the new Israel escape the torments which are to arise from the abyss." Mounce.

Verse 5

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα βασανισθῆσονται μῆνας πέντε· καὶ ὁ βασανισμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς βασανισμὸς σκορπίου, ὅταν παίσῃ ἄνθρωπον.

ἀποκτενω kill, put to death
βασανισθῆσονται Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
βασανίζω torment
μην, μηνος m month
πεντε (indeclinable) five

Perhaps corresponding to the life-cycle of the locust. The picture is one of limited or constrained punishment (cf. the use elsewhere in Revelation of βασανίζω and βασανισμος).

βασανισμος, ου m torture, torment
ὅταν when
παιω strike, sting

Verse 6

καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ζητήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θάνατον καὶ οὐ μὴ εὕρῃσουσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἐπιθυμήσουσιν ἀποθανεῖν καὶ φεύγει ὁ θάνατος ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that, those
ζητεω seek, look for
θανατος, ου m death
εὕρισκω find
ἐπιθυμεω long for, desire
ἀποθνησκω die
φευγω flee

"What a dramatic contrast to Paul's desire "to depart and be with Christ" (Phil 1:23)! For one, death leads to eternal blessing; for the other, it is an 'escape' from torment on earth to torture in the lake of fire." Mounce.

Verse 7

Καὶ τὰ ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἀκρίδων ὅμοια ἵπποις ἠτομασμένοις εἰς πόλεμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ὡς στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσοῦ, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὡς πρόσωπα ἀνθρώπων,

ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness
ἀκρις, ιδος f see v.3
ὅμοιος, α, ον like
ἵππος, ου f horse

Cf. Joel 2:4.

ἠτομασμένοις Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat
pl ἐτοιμαζω prepare, make ready
πολεμος, ου m war, battle
κεφαλή, ης f head
στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown
χρυσος, ου m gold

"They possess power to carry through their mission to a victorious end." Mounce.

προσωπον, ου n face

Verse 8

καὶ εἶχον τρίχας ὡς τρίχας γυναικῶν, καὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῶν ὡς λεόντων ἦσαν,

τρίχας Noun, acc pl θριξ, τριχος f hair
γυνη, αικος f woman

Maybe a picture of vitality.

ὄδους, ὀδοντος m tooth
λεων, οντος m lion

Cf. Joel 1:6.

Verse 9

καὶ εἶχον θώρακας ὡς θώρακας σιδηροῦς, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ τῶν πτερύγων αὐτῶν ὡς φωνὴ ἀρμάτων ἵππων πολλῶν τρεχόντων εἰς πόλεμον·

θωραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest
σιδηρους, α, ουν made of iron

They are invulnerable.

πτερυξ, υγος f wing
άρμα, τος n chariot
τρέχω run, exert oneself
πολεμος, ου m see v.7

Verse 10

καὶ ἔχουσιν οὐράς ὁμοίας σκορπίοις καὶ κέντρα, καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἀδικῆσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους μῆνας πέντε.

οὐρα, ας f tail
κεντρον, ου n sting, goad
ἐξουσια, ας f see v.3
ἀδικεω see v.4
μην, μηνος m see v.5

Verse 11

ἔχουσιν ἐπ' αὐτῶν βασιλέα τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἀβύσσου· ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἑβραϊστὶ Ἀβαδδὼν, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων.

βασιλέα Noun, acc s βασιλευς, εως m king

Mounce (unlike Witherington) argues that this is not the same as the angel that unlocked the Abyss. This is a demonic leader.

Ἑβραϊστί in Hebrew or Aramaic
Ἀβαδδων m Abaddon, Destroyer (Hebrew name of a demon transliterated into Greek)

Cf. Job 31:12; 28:22; Ps 88:11; Prov 15:11.
Witherington argues that this "is just another name for Hades, the land of the dead."

Ἑλληνικος, η, ον Greek (ἐν τῇ Ἑ. in Greek)

Ἀπολλων, ονος m Destroyer

"Many commentators feel that the verse contains a derogatory reference to the Greek god Apollo and to those emperors who claimed a special relationship with him. To name the king of the underworld Apollyon would be a cryptic way of saying that an emperor such as Domitian who liked to be regarded as Apollo incarnate was in reality a manifestation of the powers of the underworld... The allusion is strengthened by the observation that the locust was one of the symbols of the god Apollo. Beasley-Murray says that if John had in mind that both Caligula and Nero aped the deity of Apollo, and Domitian claimed to be his incarnation, 'His last word about the fifth trumpet was a master stroke of irony: the destructive host of hell had as its king the emperor of Rome.'" Mounce.

Verse 12

Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται ἔτι δύο οὐαὶ μετὰ ταῦτα.

οὐαὶ see 8:13
εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
ἔτι still, yet

Verse 13

Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth

τεσσαρες neut τεσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

Textual evidence is evenly divided for the inclusion and omission of τεσσαρων.

κερας, ατος n horn

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar

Mounce argues that the voice comes not from the horn(s) but from the altar itself.

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden
ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

"The voice could be that of the angel-priest of 8:3-5 who presented the prayers of the saints to God upon the golden altar. Or it could be the prayers themselves with their unified concern for vindication (cf. 6:9). In either case John is recalling the fundamental truth that the prayers of God's people play an active role in the eschatological drama." Mounce.

Verse 14

λέγοντα τῷ ἕκτῳ ἀγγέλῳ, ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγα· Λύσον τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους τοὺς δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ.

ἕκτος, η, ον sixth

σαλπιξ, ιγγος f trumpet

λυω loose, untie, release, set free

There is considerable speculation concerning the identity of these angels. Mounce is of the view that they "appear to be in charge of the limitless horde of demonic horsemen who ride across the pagan world spreading terror and death. They correspond to the king of the locusts in 9:11 and like him seem to disappear into the demonic forces they release."

δεδεμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl δεω
bind, tie

ποταμος, ου m river, stream

The Euphrates was a natural boundary between Israel and her enemies (cf. Gen 15:18; Deut 11:24; Josh 1:4; Is 8:5-8) and also later of the Roman Empire. So Witherington comments, "The location of these angels is significant, for not only were the Romans frightened of the Parthian hordes that might charge out of the east, but the Jews were as well, for their captors – both Babylonians and Assyrians – had come from beyond the Euphrates."

Verse 15

καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι οἱ ἠτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἑνιαυτόν, ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσιν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

ἐλύθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl λυω

ἠτοιμασμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl

ἔτοιμαζω prepare

ώρα, ας f hour, moment

μην, μηνος m month

ἑνιαυτος, ου m year

The angels have been prepared for this specific moment. "All the forces of history are under the sovereign control of God. He is the Almighty One (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 19:15; etc.)." Mounce.

ἀποκτενω kill, put to death

τριτος, η, ον third

Verse 16

καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν στρατευμάτων τοῦ ἰππικοῦ δισμυριάδες μυριάδων· ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν.

ἀριθμος, ου m number, total

στρατευμα, τος n troops, soldiers, army

ἰππικον, ου n cavalry, horsemen

δισμυριας, αδος f twenty thousand

μυριας, αδος f group of ten thousand

200 million! An immense force which no-one can escape. Witherington comments, "probably a larger number than the entire population of those who lived in the Mediterranean crescent!"

Verse 17

καὶ οὕτως εἶδον τοὺς ἵππους ἐν τῇ ὁράσει καὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπ' αὐτῶν, ἔχοντας θώρακας πυρίνους καὶ ὑακινθίνους καὶ θειώδεις· καὶ αἱ κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἵππων ὡς κεφαλαὶ λεόντων, καὶ ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν ἐκπορεύεται πῦρ καὶ καπνὸς καὶ θεῖον.

ἵππος, ου f horse

ὁρασις, εως f vision

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

θωραξ, ακος m breastplate, chest

πυρινος, η, ον fiery red, the colour of fire

ὑακινθινος, ου m jacinth, hyacinth (a precious stone, perhaps blue in colour)

θειωδης, ες sulphur-yellow

The colours match the fire, smoke and brimstone from the mouths of the horses.

κεφαλη, ης f head

λεων, οντος m lion

στομα, τος n mouth

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out

πυρ, ος n fire

καπνος, ου m smoke

θειον, ου n sulphur, brimstone

A picture of demonic forces.

Verse 18

ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν πληγῶν τούτων ἀπεκτάνθησαν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τοῦ θείου τοῦ ἐκπορευομένου ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν.

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
πληγη, ης f plague

The fire, smoke and brimstone are each separate plagues.

ἀπεκτάνθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
ἀποκτείνω

Verse 19

ἡ γὰρ ἐξουσία τῶν ἵππων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν· αἱ γὰρ οὐραὶ αὐτῶν ὅμοιαι ὄφρασι, ἔχουσαι κεφαλὰς, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς ἀδικοῦσιν.

ἐξουσια, ας f power
οὐρα, ας f tail
ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as
ὄφις, εως m snake, serpent

Perhaps another way of indicating their demonic nature.

ἔχουσαι Verb, pres act ptc, f nom pl ἔχω
κεφαλή, ης f head
ἀδικεῶ harm

Witherington comments, "Again the author is not describing what will happen but using images to create a sense of the horrible nature of undergoing God's wrath. In 12:9 Satan is called the old serpent, which is probably an indication of the demonic nature of these creatures. The point is that God allows evil but uses it for his own just purposes – he makes the wrath of even Satan serve Him. That the horses are harmful before and behind may also be reminiscent of the Parthians, who shot both going forward and turning around facing backward."

Verse 20

Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἳ οὐκ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν ταῖς πληγαῖς ταύταις, οὐδὲ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσιν τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδῶλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα, ἃ οὔτε βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν,

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other
ἀπεκτάνθησαν see v.18
μετανοεω repent
χειρ, χειρος f hand
προσκυνεω worship
δαίμονιον, ου n demon

εἰδῶλον, ου n idol

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

ἀργυρους, α, ουν made of silver

χαλκος, ου m copper, brass, bronze

λίθινος, η, ον made of stone

ξύλινος, η, ον wooden

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

βλεπω see, look, be able to see, beware of

περιπατεω walk

Cf. Deut 4:28; Ps 115:4-7; 135:15ff; Dan 5:23.

Verse 21

καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν φόνων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν φαρμάκων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν κλεμμάτων αὐτῶν.

φονος, ου m murder, killing

φαρμακον, ου n witchcraft, sorcery

Cf. Gal 5:20; Rev 18:23; 21:8. Witherington comments, "The use of witchcraft and potions was part and parcel of pagan religion. It was used to gain control of supernatural forces or of events controlled by those forces."

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

κλεμμα, τος n theft, robbery

"When men turn from the knowledge of God, the path leads downward to idolatry and immorality (cf. Rom 1:18-32)." Mounce.