

Cobra Helicopters and Malleable Literalism

Or Literalism: Locustions, Scorcusts, or Cobra Helicopters?

Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.

² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.

³ Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth.

⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone.

⁶ And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.

⁷ In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces,

⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth;

⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.

¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails.

¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

(Revelation 9:1-11)

Malleable Literalism

I remember very few [class lessons from college](#). 1988 was a long time ago. But I can tell you one of the few that I remember like it was yesterday. It was an Intro to Bible class and everyone in my Christian Liberal Arts college had to take it. The lesson was about how to read the Bible properly. A lot of people confuse the word “[properly](#)” with the word “[literally](#),” as if to read the Bible properly means you must read it literally. The professor had been teaching for probably 40 years. He knew the tendency. So, he took us to the Song of Solomon and had us look up several verses.

“How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful you are! ... Your eyes are like doves behind your veil ... Your hair is like a flock of goats ... Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn eyes ... Your lips are like scarlet thread ... Your temples are like a slice of pomegranate ... Your neck is like the tower of David ... built with rows of stones and which are hung a thousand shields...”

He then wondered aloud with us, “[Doesn't she sound lovely?](#)” Then, he presented to us [a drawing of this woman pictured literally](#) (see pic). Her hair *was* goats, her eyes *were* doves, her lips were *sown together with thread*, her mouth *dripped*

actual honey (with a little Poo Bear was there to catch it in his honey bowl), her neck *was* an ancient rocky circular tower, and so on. Trust me, you wouldn't want to take this woman home to mother. But is this really what Solomon meant? Is reading this literally reading it properly? Of course not.

The Song of Solomon Illustrated
(for our literalist friends.)



When we began our study of Revelation, we noted that throughout the book we come upon a host of numbers, animals, colors, objects, events, lists, and other things that **need to be interpreted**. I said then that this is one of the most difficult aspects of trying to figure out the book of Revelation.

Should you read them **literally**, **symbolically**, **allegorically**, or what? There are fundamental disagreements on this point that become more and more complex as soon as examples

enter into the picture. To some degree, the problems between camps are made worse by rhetoric, hyperbole, strawmen, and sometimes even slander against those who disagree. I want us to look more deeply at this using Revelation 9; I'll try not to engage in these.

While we could do this with many of the chapters in Revelation, I've chosen now to take the deeper dive into the realm of so-called “**literal**” vs. **other non-literal views** of interpretation because this chapter has one of the most popular examples used to illustrate this point. The chapter unfolds **the fifth angel** blowing his trumpet (**Rev 9:1**). He sees **a star falling** from heaven who is given the key to the bottomless pit. When he opens it, smoke ascends and in the smoke “**came locusts on the earth**” with power like the power of **scorpions** (3). It describes them as having something like crowns of gold, human faces (7), women's hair, lion's teeth (8), iron breastplates, and terrible noisy wings (9). What are these creatures?

The best-selling prophecy author **Hal Lindsey** wrote the following back in 1973 about them.

The Locusts described in this chapter are unlike any known to man today. It's very difficult to fully understand everything about these unnatural creatures, but we can make certain

observations about them. They are possessed by the especially malignant demon who have just been released from the abyss ... These 'locusts' have a scorpion like stinger in their tails with which they relentlessly torment men for five months ... There are diverse opinions among Bible teachers as to whether these creatures are actually going to be a supernatural, mutant locust especially created for this judgment or whether they symbolize some modern device of warfare.

I have a Christian friend who was a Green Beret in Viet Nam. When he first read this chapter he said, 'I know what those are. I've seen hundreds of them in Viet Nam. They're Cobra helicopters!' That may just be conjecture, but it does give you something to think about! A cobra helicopter does fit the composite description very well. They also make the sound of 'many chariots.' My friend believes that the means of torment will be a kind of nerve gas sprayed from its tail.¹

What in 1973 Lindsey called "conjecture" became for him by the late '90s something that has been called "malleable literalistic" dogma.² This is when you are

¹ Hal Lindsey, *There's a New World Coming: 'A Prophetic Odyssey'* (Santa Ana, CA: Vision House Publishers, 1973), 138-39.

² For "Malleable Literalism" see Cortney S. Basham, "Hal Lindsey's *The Late, Great Planet Earth* and the Rise of Popular Premillennialism in the 1970s" (2012), Western Kentucky University Masters Theses & Special Projects 1205, p. 43ff, <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2207&context=theses>. Sizer writes, "Lindsey's speculations become more dogmatic and categorical, and so phrases such as 'might symbolize' become 'actually saw.'" Stephen R. Sizer, "Hal Lindsey (b. 1929) The Father of Apocalyptic Christian Zionism," (April 1999), <http://www.stephensizer.com/articles/hallindsey.htm#FOOTNOTE%2054>.

allowed to change your “literal” interpretation over time to fit more recent current events and this actually proves that you are on the right track. It is difficult to know why this rather than so many other similar interpretations by Lindsey has become the great example (he has scores of them³), but the reason behind it is not difficult to understand. According to Lindsey himself, “The real issue ... is whether prophecy should be interpreted literally or allegorically.”⁴

Literalism is an essential (*sine qua non*) of Dispensational hermeneutics, supposedly vs. other ways of reading prophecy. Ryrie says, “Dispensationalists claim that their

³ Other examples include: John's “horses prepared for battle” are heavily armed attack helicopters, “crowns of gold” are the helmets worn by pilots, and the “sound of their wings” are the “thunderous sound of many attack helicopters flying overhead.”⁵⁵ Just as imaginatively, the “bow” wielded by the Antichrist in Revelation 6:1-2, is apparently, “...a code for long range weapons like ICBM's.”⁵⁶ The reference to the “colour of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone” in Revelation 9:17 becomes the “Chinese national flag ... emblazoned on the military vehicles.”⁵⁷ Hal Lindsey, *The Apocalypse Code* (Palos Verdes, CA: Western Front, 1997), 42, 72. *Planet Earth: The Final Chapter* (Beverly Hills, CA: Western Front, 1998), 247.

In one place he writes, “Just exactly how could a first century prophet describe, much less understand, the incredible advances in science and technology that exist at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries? Yet he testified and God bore witness that he actually saw and heard things like:

- supersonic jet aircraft with missiles...
- advanced attack helicopters
- modern main battle tanks
- intercontinental ballistic missiles with Multiple Independently Targeted Reentry Vehicles tipped with thermonuclear warheads (ICBM's that are MIRVed).
- battlefield artillery and missiles with neutron-nuclear warheads
- biological and chemical weapons
- aircraft carriers, missile cruisers, nuclear submarines
- laser weapons
- space stations and satellites
- the new super secret HAARP weapon system (High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program)” (*Apocalypse Code*, 36; cited in Sizer).

⁴ Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 175.

principle of hermeneutics is that of literal interpretation.”⁵ Even progressive dispensationalists say that their more middle-of-the-road view “is not an abandonment of ‘literal’ interpretation for ‘spiritual’ interpretation.”⁶ Why is this so important? Is it that others don’t like to read the bible “literally?”

Unfortunately, “**literalism**” has become a kind of **boogeyman** word used to scare people (on both sides). It isn’t that these Christ-fearing Christians deny things like figures of speech or parables or poetry. It’s that they are inconsistent on this point and, at times, their language has become poisonous (all sides can be guilty of this). Think about **synonyms** you will find throughout their literature for “literal”: *plain, obvious, natural, normal, accurate, face-value, is what it says, says what it means*. In other words, if you don’t read the Bible “literally” (which we still haven’t defined), you don’t take it seriously, you don’t believe what it says, you are using unnatural, inaccurate, non-obvious, obscure methods of interpretation. Do you see how this “poisons the well”⁷ without even making an argument?

⁵ Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 86.

⁶ Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 52.

⁷ I’m not using “poison” here as an *ad hominem*. Rather, I’m using it as a way of showing how the informal logical fallacy called “poisoning the well,” which is itself a special case of *ad hominem* is

This comes out at various times when they are talking about their interpretation of Revelation vs. those like amillennialism and postmillennialism. For example, “The negative effect of amillennialism on eschatology and the vagaries [whims] of postmillennial optimism combined with a denial of literal interpretation made impossible an objective study of the ... Scripture.”⁸ Or again, “If one does not employ normal interpretation, then objectivity is lost to the extent that he does not use it consistently. Switching the hermeneutical base from literal to allegorical or to semiallegorical or to theological inevitably results in different, inconsistent, and often contradictory interpretations.”⁹ In other words, if you aren't interpreting literally, then you are just making things up as you go along.

Now you should be able to see why this example from Lindsey is used so often. It demonstrates pretty obviously that he is not using his own literalistic method of interpretation. The frustrating part of it is that some have created a non-falsifiable defense system where it is impossible to point this out. For example, Lindsey will

often used, often without malicious intent, to bias someone against the opposite view because of the language that is being used.

⁸ John F. Walvoord, “A Preview of Leis Sperry Chafer’s ‘Systematic Theology,’” *BibSac* 105:417 (Jan '48): 118-19.

⁹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 128–129.

simply say that he *is* being literal, it's just that John wasn't able to tell us about all the 20th (now 21st) century things he was seeing because he had no reference. He didn't know what a Cobra helicopter was, so he did his best to describe it with things he knew. And, of course, when something goes obviously awry with the interpretation, it can be changed for more relevant current events that seem to fit (“For example, in 1970, he proposed that the ten-horned beast of Revelation 13 was the European Union (EU). However, when the EU passed the ten nation membership mark, that explanation simply disappeared from his future writings and was replaced with images more relevant to current events. For example, the “ten horns” might refer to ten alliances consisting of a number of nations. Part of the tremendous appeal of his brand of premillennialism comes from his ability to project future world events based on Scripture because of its malleability.”¹⁰)

One of the problems is that “literalism” **isn't often defined** or, at least, people are not agreeing on a definition and sometimes those definitions (as just pointed out) are allowed to change without people telling you. So how should we understand the word? This itself is difficult, because even **our**

¹⁰ **Basham**, 43-44.

basic dictionary definitions can be confusing to us. For example, here is the first definition in *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*: “1. According to the letter; primitive; real; not figurative or metaphorical; as the *literal* meaning of a phrase.” We could ask here, but what if the letter (i.e. word) is “like” or “as?” Those are, by definition, leading us to metaphors or similes which are non-literal (remember Solomon’s woman: like doves, like thread, and so on). Yet, the definition outright states that “literal” is “not figurative or metaphorical.” See the problem?

The word “literal” is a late 14th c. word that comes from the Latin *literals/literalis* meaning, “of or belonging to letters or writing.” Not really very helpful. And so, *Etymology Online* can take this and end up just as confusing as Webster was when it says it means therefore, “Taking words in their natural meaning” (originally in reference to Scripture and opposite to mystical or allegorical).” So is this a hopeless endeavor? I don’t think so.

I think R. C. Sproul has done us a great favor when he takes the etymology and says, “To interpret the bible literally is to interpret it *as literature*” (italics mine), because “literal” and “literature” both come from this Latin word *litera*.” Therefore he concludes, “The natural meaning of a passage is

to be interpreted according to the normal rules of grammar, speech, syntax and context.”¹¹ That doesn’t mean everyone will magically come to the same interpretation.¹² It does mean that we now have a definition of “literal” that allows us to interpret a metaphor *as a metaphor* without being accused of “spiritualizing.” To put it another way, if you take a metaphor to be a metaphor, then you *are* interpreting it literally—that is, as it is meant to be taken. Again, everyone knows this, it’s just that I think people often talk past each other on these points.

So let’s get more specific now about the book of Revelation. Here is a modern Dispensational Premillennialist explaining why he interprets the book as he does. “By its own claim the book is a prophecy and deserves a literal interpretation, just as other prophetic books do. To justify a spiritualizing approach on the basis of the book’s many symbols misses a significant distinction between the way God gave the revelation to John and the way readers should interpret that revelation.”¹³ (By the way, “spiritualizing” can

¹¹ R. C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 48-49.

¹² Ironically, Ryrie in fact has a definition could be seen as similar. “This means interpretation which gives to every word the same meaning it would have in normal usage” (*Dispensationalism Today*, 86).

¹³ Robert L. Thomas, “A Classical Dispensationalist View of Revelation,” in *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and C. Marvin Pate, Zondervan Counterpoints Collection (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 181. Thomas, of course, does go on to

be just as poisonous as “literalism” if by it someone means “not true” or “you just made that up.” But the spiritual world is very much a literal world, it’s just not the *physical* world. Thus, by “literal” I think a lot of people often mean only the “physical” world, and this is unfortunate.) Beale summarizes the point fairly when he says, “there is a presumption that ... one should interpret literally except where one is forced to interpret symbolically by clear indications of context.”¹⁴ And, of course, everyone has symbolic interpretations in Revelation,¹⁵ even if sometimes they try to pass them off as “literal” like the helicopters.

But he goes on to say something very important about this in his reading of the book. He says, “This rule should be turned on its head,” because “we are told in the book’s introduction that the majority of the material in it is revelatory symbolism (1:12–20 and 4:1–22:5 at the least).”¹⁶

explain himself and it’s worth the read. But in comparison to the next quotation from Beale I’m going to give, it is immediately clear that they see the book very differently.

¹⁴ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 52.

¹⁵ Lindsey has a good example in the same chapter when he says of the star that fell from heaven, “The ‘star’ of Revelation 9:1 has to be a person rather than a literal star, since ‘he’ is given a key with which he opens the bottomless pit. I believe this fallen star is none other than Satan himself, described in Isaiah 14:12 as ‘Lucifer’ or ‘Star of the morning.’ Satan receives the key from Christ Himself, since Christ is the possessor of the key of hell (Revelation 1:18)” (*There’s a New World*, 121). I have zero problem with this.

¹⁶ Beale, *ibid.* He cites first and foremost the word in the first verse “signified” (AV; “made it known” ESV) (*sēmainō*). The premillennialist Robert Mounce concludes as Beale does, that it, “Carries the idea of figurative representation. Strictly speaking, it means to make known by

Not that it isn't real, mind you. Not some kind of a "spiritualization" that has no correspondence to reality. But that its symbols point to different things. He cites [the book's own words](#) where, for example, a literalist might insist that Jesus holding seven golden lampstands in his hand are literal lampstands had not the Revelation itself said, "[the seven lampstands are the seven churches](#)" ([Rev 1:20](#)). And "[the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches](#)" ([20](#)).

But that's just his point. What he is saying is [really important](#) to grapple with. He is suggesting that the book itself tells you to read it figuratively *unless you have no good reason to*. "[Hence,](#)" he concludes, "[the predominant manner by which to approach the material will be according to a nonliteral interpretative method.](#) Of course, some parts are not symbolic, but the essence of the book is figurative. Where there is lack of clarity about whether something is symbolic, the scales of judgment should be tilted in the [direction of a nonliteral analysis.](#)"¹⁷ In this way, Revelation is more like Song of Solomon than it is the book of Acts. This is a different kind of a book than what many people

some sort of sign. This is admirably suited to the symbolic character of the book. This should warn the reader not to expect a literal presentation of future history, but a symbolic portrayal of that which must yet take place. [Robert H. Mounce](#), *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 42. [Thomas](#) (p. 181) simply disagree, but offers no proof.

¹⁷ [Beale](#), *ibid.*

make it out to be, which is one reason why it is so difficult for us. And this is why we have so many different interpretations of Revelation, including the [millennium](#) which we will come to in ch. 20.

I'm raising all this here because it seemed like a good time in the book, based off other people's interpretations, to help us wrestle with this fundamental disagreement Christians have on how to approach the book. It is something we really have to deal with in nearly every chapter, but we are entering the portion of the book when it will become increasingly important to have made your own mind up about this question. It is something where [everyone needs to come to their own conclusions](#). As for me, I'm going to move forward with the assumption that Beale is correct. [I invite you](#) to read the chapter (and rest of the book) with me and see if it might help you make different or even better sense of it than you have previously. If it doesn't, that's OK too. We are all in different places along our journey of Revelation.

Revelation 9: Structure and Context

Moving into the chapter means first understanding how it is laid out. Revelation 9 continues [the third or the seven](#)

cycles. This cycle is the **seven trumpets**. Now, **four trumpets** were blown by four angels at the end of Revelation 8 (**8:7-12**). Immediately after the fourth trumpet, an eagle (corresponding to the eagle living creature in heaven) was crying with a loud voice as it flew overhead. It cried, “**Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow**” (**13**). We are going to see two more of the trumpets in this chapter.

These **4 trumpets** are connected to the **6th trumpet** by a chiasm, in the same way that **the four horsemen-seals** were connected to the **sixth seal** chiastically (see A and A¹):

- A. **Four angels** and **trumpets** / **one third struck** (8:7-12)
- B. **Woe, woe, woe** (8:13)
- C. Fifth trumpet: key to **the abyss** given to **fallen star** (9:1-2)
- D. **Locupions** torment for **five months** (9:3-6)
- E. **Horses prepared for war** (9:7a)
- F. **Description of Locupions warrior** (9:7b-9a)
- E¹. **Horses rushing to war** (9:9b)
- D¹. **Locupion stings**: harm men for **five months** (9:10)
- C¹. King is the **angel of the abyss: Abaddon/Apollyon** (9:11)
- B¹. **First woe** past, **two woes** coming (9:12)
- A¹. **Sixth trumpet: four angels** freed / **one third** of mankind **killed** (9:13-21)¹⁸

¹⁸ See **Christine Smith**, “Revelation 9,” A Little Perspective (Dec 12, 2016), <https://www.alittleperspective.com/revelation-9-2016/>; **JLB**, “Revelation 9:1-11,” Biblical Chiasm Exchange (Jan 6, 2016), <https://www.chiasmusxchange.com/2016/01/06/revelation-95-10/>. The sixth trumpet has its own internal structure just as the sixth seal through the end of ch. 6 did.

This means that the **fifth trumpet** stands as a central unit just like **the fifth seal** did. In both “5ths” we have the central idea. (Why the fifths? Perhaps it reverberates with the **re-tuning of songs** from the realm of music as this is the great NT book of liturgy?) With the fifth seal it was the cry of the martyrs under the altar by the throne of God in a kind of song of lamentation, “**How long before you avenge our blood**” (6:10). With the fifth trumpet the center is the crowned-royal “**locupions**” or “**scorpusts**” (locust-scorpions) buzzing around, preparing for war to go and harm the men of the earth (9:7b-9a). Fitting parallels.

The chapter itself is part of a larger chiasm (see above), and the fifth trumpet (vv. 1-11) is a self-contained unit. It is possible to see **two centers**, depending on if you are looking at it with repeating words or thematically. In one, it is **the description** of these creatures that is the center (see above). In the other, it is **the instructions** given to these creatures.

- A. A star falls and is given a key to the Abyss, vv. 1–2
- B. Locusts with authority like scorpions come from the open abyss, v. 3
- C. Instructions not to hurt green things or kill, vv. 4–6**
- B'. Description of locusts, vv. 7–10
- A'. Their king is the angel of the Abyss, v. 11¹⁹

¹⁹ **Peter J. Leithart**, *Revelation*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, vol. 1, The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments (London;

Revelation 9: Structure and Context

It begins, “**And the fifth angel blew his trumpet**” (9:1a). What happened? John looked and saw “**a star fallen from heaven to earth.**” This is a first and simple place to think about our topic if **literalism**. What might this mean? As we to suppose that one of those gaseous giants in the farthest recesses of outer space is going to come down and destroy the planet? That’s what we should be thinking if we take this literal-physically, especially reading modern cosmology into it. But of course, that’s nonsense. Maybe John is seeing an asteroid, which might look like a star at first.

It is curious that we have already seen this in Revelation. The **sixth seal** opened and “**stars of the sky fell to the earth**” (Rev 6:13). There, the description was attached to a simile, “**As the fig trees sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.**” We saw that this was a quotation from Isaiah 34 in a prophecy against the nations, with Israel perhaps being singled out as the fig tree. In other words, they were **human kingdoms** falling, just like we see Daniel predicting throughout his book, but using different symbols (like animals). We also saw a **star** named “**Wormwood**” (8:11) and

Oxford; New York; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury; Bloomsbury T&T Clark: An Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018), 376.

learned that was tied both to nations and more than likely also to some fallen supernatural heavenly being.

The clincher is that **9:1 parallels 9:11**. Here, we learn that **the star is an “angel.”** **“They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit.”** It is encouraging to me that **Hal Lindsey understood** the main idea of this correctly, if not also a bit ironically. **“The ‘star’ of Revelation 9:1 has to be a person rather than a literal star, since ‘he’ is given a key with which he opens the bottomless pit.”** He goes on to identify him. **“I believe this fallen star is none other than Satan himself, described in Isaiah 14:12 as ‘Lucifer’ or ‘Star of the morning.’ Satan receives the key from Christ Himself, since Christ is the possessor of the key of hell (Revelation 1:18)”** (see n. 15).

Let’s spend a moment and think about what we are seeing here. First, **Lindsey is right** that angels or more properly in the OT, *elohim*, as referred to as **“stars”** (see also **Dt 4:19; Job 38:7; Ps 148:2-3; cf. Acts 7:34**). There is a close association between the gods of the nations and the stars. Second, **he is surely right** that Christ gave this entity the key, for it is Christ who won this key (of Death and Hades) in his death, burial, descent, and resurrection. The death, burial, descent, and resurrection that we celebrate today are quite

literal, being told in books that demand to be that way, not symbolically. And had they not happened, this key would not have been given.

But is this Satan?²⁰ It is possible that it is. We do not know for sure. There is given a different name here: **Abaddon** (**Rev 9:11**). This is a word that appears a handful of times in the OT where it is often used in parallel to Sheol (which in Gk. is Hades).²¹ “Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon (LXX: *apoleia*/destruction) has no covering” (**Job 26:6**). “Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man!” (**Prov 15:11**; cf. **27:20**). Literally speaking here, Abaddon is a place. But at least once, however, it is personified with Death. “Abaddon and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears’” (**Job 28:22**). We have seen that Death and Hades are personified by Revelation, and that they both have behind them some kind of evil fallen supernatural beings. So also Abaddon.

John gives the Greek equivalent, so that we will not be mistaken. “In Greek he is called Apollyon.”²² There is an

²⁰ M. Hutter, “Abaddon,” ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 1.

²¹ In the Babylonian Talmud (*Er* 19a) it is given as the second of the seven names of Gehenna.

²² It is common for John to give us two languages:

allusion if not equation to the god **Apollo**, who is a god of **pestilence and destruction**.²³ A few interesting facts about Apollo are worth mentioning. First, he is the **twin brother of Artemis**, whom we saw is the goddess linked to the term “wormwood” in ch. 8. Second, he is credited (with Artemis) as having **invented archery**. We will see warfare closely associated with him here. Third, the Greek word for destruction is *apollymi*, hence a play on his name. Curiously, one of the deeds of Apollos was to **destroy the monstrous serpent** Python at Delphi. We know that serpents are closely associated with Satan. Whoever this creature is, he is powerful, but not as powerful as Christ who gives him the keys, meaning that Christ is sovereign and omnipotent over what is about to transpire.

“**He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit**” (9:2a). This is **not some new place** altogether unheard of in the Bible, as this translation might lead you to believe.²⁴ “**Bottomless pit**”

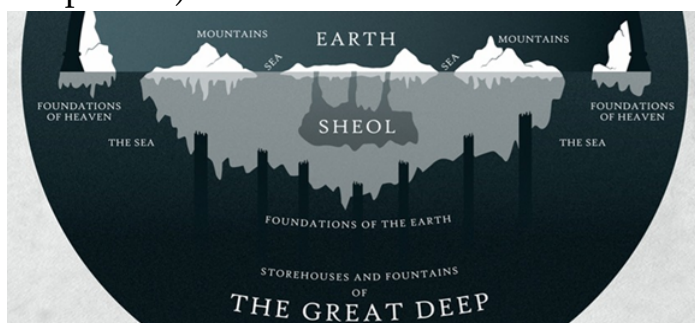
Verse	First Half	Second Half
John 5:2	Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool. in Aramaic called Bethesda.
John 19:13	He brought Jesus to the place called The Stone Pavement. in Aramaic Gabbatha.
John 19:16	He went to the place called The Place of the Skull. in Aramaic is called Golgotha.
John 20:16	. . . which means Teacher.	in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” . . .
Rev 9:11	They have as king over them the angel of the abyss. in Hebrew is Abaddon.
:16	assembled at the place. . .	Hebrew is called Armageddon.

²³ On Revelation 12 parallels with Apollo’s birth, see the Erie Catechism, vol. 2.

²⁴ “Bottomless pit” occurs in the ESV *only* in Revelation.

is the word “abyss” (*abussos*),²⁵ which is how it is translated in **Rev 20:1, 3** where Satan is bound for 1,000 years. It translates the OT *tehom* (deep; **Gen 1:2**) and is clearly a synonym for the watery grave of Sheol (**Ps 71:20**), which is translated in Greek as Hades.²⁶ In the OT, the sea-monsters **Rahab** (**Isa 51:9-10**) and **Leviathan** (**Job 41:31-32; Ps 74:13-14**), and the **Nachash** (**Amos 9:3**) all hang out near here.²⁷ These are all loosely synonymous with Satan.

²⁵ This abyss is said to have a “shaft” (**Rev 9:2b**) here, which may be why some people seem to think this is a totally unknown place outside of this book. In this verse we have the abyss (*abussos*) and the well (*phrear*). So the YLT has “the *pit* of the *abyss*.” The NAS has “the *bottomless pit*.” But the ESV has “*shaft* of the *bottomless pit*.” Wells obviously have shafts. The ESV has smoke coming out of the “shaft,” while the NAS has it coming out of the “pit.” When you understand that Sheol was thought of as a deep well with shafts going down to it, it starts to make sense (see the picture).



²⁶ When we think of Hades, we usually think of fire. When we think of Sheol, water is a more common idea. Ezekiel, “On the day the cedar went down to Sheol I caused mourning; I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped” (**Ezek 31:15**). “The Rephaim tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering” (**Job 26:5-6**). Also the “Waters of the abyss” (**1En 17:17**), and “mouth of [the rivers of] the abyss” (**1En 17:8**), and “the water went up from the abyss” (**HistRech 10:7**). However, fire is also associated with Sheol. “A fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains” (**Dt 32:22**). “Sheol, the barren womb, the land never satisfied with water, and the fire that never says, ‘Enough’” (**Prov 30:16**). The LXX of this last verse fascinatingly uses the words Hades (Grave/Sheol), Eros (Love), Tartaros and Ge (Gia/Earth).

²⁷ Also **Job 7:12; 26:12; Ps 88:10; Isa 27:1; Ezek 32:2** (**3Bar 5:2; TAsh 7:3; J&A 12:10**; by virtue of the synonymous relationship between the “deep” (*tehom*) and the “sea” (*yam*) in **Job 28:14; 38:16; 41:23; Ps 32:7; 105:9; 134:6; Isa 51:10; Odes 12:3; Sir 24:29** (these are all LXX references).

							HOME/BOUND	
Passage		Creature					Hebrew	Greek
Isa 51:9-10	Rahab			Dragon			<i>tehom</i>	<i>abyssos</i>
Job 41:31-32		Leviathan					<i>tehom</i>	<i>abyssos</i>
Amos 9:3			Nachash				<i>yam</i>	<i>thalassa</i>
Isa 27:1		Leviathan	Nachash	Dragon			<i>yam</i>	<i>thalassa</i>
Rev 20:2			(Serpent)	Dragon	Satan	Devil		<i>abyssos</i>

But this watery grave is **being viewed differently** here. For “from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft (pit/well)” (9:2b). As Deep Purple might sing, “Smoke in the water...” Someone seems to be **burning something** down there. Or perhaps, something is *always burning* down there. Don’t confuse in your mind here that Sheol is somehow pictured as a deep ocean. It isn’t the ocean. Rather, it is through the deep that one *gets* to Sheol, which is itself a vast **land** (Job 10:21-22) guarded by **gates** (Isa 38:10), a place with **rivers** (Ezek 31:15) and **fire** (Dt 32:22), much like Hades. Hence the translation. But I think the main reason it uses this imagery is because this is **paralleling the the prayers rising up to God like smoke** (8:3-4). Their prayers rise up; so to does God’s answer, in the form of smoke and something else rising out of hell.

Suddenly, up from the smoke come hordes of locusts. We are instantly reminded of the “iron furnace” of Egypt (Dt 4:20) and the plague of locust that God sent to them (Ex 10:4ff). Both images remind us of the evil gods of the Egyptians (Dt 4:19; Ex 12:12). These locusts should do that too. For these are no ordinary locusts, as Lindsey was also right to notice. “They were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth” (3).

Here is where we should look at the center of the fifth trumpet and the description of these creatures. “In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle” (7a). This is an army prepared for war. Curiously, Apollo was the father of Centaurus, the half-horse, half-man creature. “On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold” (Rev 9:7b). This is a royal cavalry, but of evil origin. “Their faces were like human faces” (7c). Remember this for something we’ll discuss in a moment. “Their hair like women’s hair” (8a). It was long, like the ancient pagan warriors of old. “Their teeth like lion’s teeth” (8b). Notice, all of these are described as “like.” They are similes. Lions remind us again of royalty. “They had breastplates like ... iron” (9a). Their royal crowns of gold are contrasted with their impenetrable armor. They have wings. Terrible, noise-

making wings. “The noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle” (9b). And they have tails which sting like scorpions (10a). This is the power to hurt people for five months (10b; 5). As for the sting, Lindsey is again right when he says, “The sting will be so painful that men will wish they could die. History records that the ancient Roman soldiers were famous for their ability to take pain without flickering an eye. But when several of them were bitten by scorpions in the desert of Egypt they screamed and writhed in pain. Scorpion stings are among the most painful wounds a person can endure.”

But what about this idea of John depicting modern helicopters? Unfortunately, while the guy had a great imagination, this is not the way to do biblical interpretation. There is just nothing literal about this, especially when you look at your OT. In fact, John is seeing something much more exciting and terrifying, and yes, quite literal. It just doesn't come from this world. While the depiction of locusts and the furnace reminds us of the plagues of Egypt, the scorpions should remind us of something more sinister.

Along with serpents (which appear in 9:19), scorpions are clearly associated with demonic evil by Jesus. In the only other appearance (except Luke 11:12) of the creatures in the

NT, our Lord told his 70 disciples, “I saw *Satan* fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on *serpents* and *scorpions*, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that *the spirits* are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Lk 10:18-20). Notice how scorpions are sandwiched between Satan and evil spirits.²⁸

Now read this against the backdrop of other ancient cultures. For example, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Gilgamesh travels to the place of the divine council only to find “scorpion-beings” watching and guarding the gate of the Netherworld (*Gilgamesh Tablet 9*). The Phoenician god Šadrafa (whose name contains the word ‘*rafa*—to heal—which is the probable root of the Rephaim giants of the Bible; see below) has two symbols: the snake and the scorpion. The word Šadrafa is possibly related to “Master of the Enchained” (Rabbasire; think Rev 20?) and “God of the Underworld” (Nergal).²⁹ Likewise, you have the Egyptian

²⁸ The only other times that scorpions appear are when God is reminding (Dt 8:15) or predicting (1Kg 12:11, 14; 2Ch 10:11, 14) Israel’s discipline from God for their rebellion (Ezek 2:6). Consider that (flying) fiery serpents (*saraphs*) appear in Numbers 21:6-9 and Isaiah 14:29 related to supernatural entities, and scorpions could also take on that flavor.

²⁹ H. J. W. Drijvers, *Iconography of Religions* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1976), 18.

goddess Selkit (or Serqet) who was “friend of the dead,” and had seven scorpions who guarded Isis on her journeys.

Where are these creatures in Rev 9 coming from? The pits of hell, the abyss, abaddon. What’s so very strange is that in two places in the OT, Sheol and Abaddon are immediately preceded by just one verse with the dead Rephaim giants, whom all ancient peoples unanimously regarded as the origin of demons. “The Rephaim³⁰ tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering” (Job 26:5-7). Again, “Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the Rephaim³¹ rise up to praise you? Is your steadfast love declared in the grave or your faithfulness in Abaddon?” (Ps 88:10-11). In the same chapter that Lucifer and the flying seraphim are found, Isaiah connects these Rephaim³² to Sheol and calls them “the leaders of the earth” and the “kings of the nations” (Isa 14:9). Guess what Genesis 6:4 called them? “The mighty men of old,” “the men of renown,” “the Nephilim.” Many scholars believe that these were kings. One of them, Nimrod, sure

³⁰ The word literally is *rephaim*. LXX translates rephaim as *gigantes* (giants), but puts it as a question, “Shall giants be born from under the water?”

³¹ Again, the word is literally *rephaim*. Rephaim are sometimes translated as “shadows” (NJB) or “shades” (JPS). Why not just Rephaim?

³² The LXX translates rephaim as *gigantes* (giants).

was, and some have even identified [Apollo](#) with Nimrod.³³ Isaiah is not saying this just for fun. He is warning the king of Babylon that Sheol and the Rephaim are excited to meet you when you go down to hell. This is not a place you want to go because *they* are there ([Prov 9:18](#), “[The Rephaim³⁴ are there, in the deep places Sheol her invited ones!](#)”).

[What are the Rephaim?](#) This is simply another name for the [Nephilim](#), the human-divine abomination hybrids of the Old Testament. Like Revelation 9, they looked like men (only a lot bigger). Some of their possible animal-hybrid counterparts were called Ariel or “[lionlike](#)” ([2Sam 23:20](#)), and two were slain by Benaiah, one of David’s mighty men, reminding us of the teeth of these Locupions.³⁵ All of this to

³³ For example, [Tom Horn](#), *Zenith 2016: The Revised & Expanded Edition of Apollyon Rising 2012* (Crane, MO: Defender, 2013); Thomas Horn, and Josh Peck, *Abaddon Ascending: The Ancient Conspiracy at the Center of CERN’s Most Secretive Mission* (Crane, MO: Defender, 2016). These are rather pop-eschatology examples. In a quick search, I didn’t find any more scholarly work making this connection.

³⁴ Rephaim is translated as “*gegeneis*” or Titans (LXX) and “*gigantes*” (Vulgate).

³⁵ Some scholars suggest that there were mythological figures. See Stefan Mürger, “Ariel,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible DDD*, 2nd extensively rev. ed., ed. K. van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter Willem van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 89. In the strange work called the Book of Jasher, written sometime long after the close of the NT, certainly dating to the Middle Ages, but not published in English until 1625 (but well before the advent of modern genetic manipulation), we read about Zepho, the grandson of Esau, a hero. “[And Zepho went and he saw and behold there was a large cave at the bottom of the mountain, and there was a great stone there at the entrance of the cave, and Zepho split the stone and he came into the cave and he looked and behold, a large animal was devouring the ox; from the middle upward it resembled a man, and from the middle downward it resembled an animal, and Zepho rose up against the animal and slew it with his sword](#)” ([Jasher 61:15](#)). It also says, “[And every man \[...\] corrupted the earth, and the earth was filled with violence. And \[...\] the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the earth, the beasts of](#)

say, John isn't describing man-made 21st century helicopters. The truth is so much more interesting and terrifying. He is describing a great plague of demonic activity that is unleashed at the command of Apollyon who must obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

In my opinion, this is all reading the text quite literally, only not physical-literal, but spiritual-literal. Not “spiritualizing,” as in demons really exist. But spiritual, as in the unseen realm. This isn't untethered allegory, but objective interpretation rooted in the OT and based in the bible's consistent teaching of such images. In fact, remember

the field and the fowls of the air, and taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other, in order therewith to provoke the Lord; and God saw the whole earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth, all men and all animals” (*Jasher* 4:17-18).

On a different track, Job mentions “the helpers” of Rahab (*Job* 9:13). Rahab is a synonym of Leviathan/Satan (above).

Job 26:12-13	Isaiah 27:1
By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered <i>Rahab</i> . By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the <i>fleeing serpent</i> (<i>nachash bariab</i>).	In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish <i>Leviathan</i> the <i>fleeing serpent</i> (<i>nachash bariab</i>), Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.

The *Enuma Elish* (*Enuma Elish* 1.134-143) has a monster parallel with Rahab called **Tiamat**. Tiamat also has helpers. These helpers are called monster serpents, fierce dragons, **hairy heromen**, **lion monsters**, **lion men**, **scorpion men**, **mighty demons**, **fish men**, and **bull men—chimeras** (half-man half-beast) known in many world mythologies. Similarly, the Canaanites tell of the “**Big Ones**,” monsters who support the sea god Yam (who is eventually destroyed by Baal, *KTU* 2 1.3 iii:38ff. *Yam* is also the Hebrew word for “sea.”) and of helper-gods who reside in the netherworld (*TUAT* II/3, 317). Curiously, when Tiamat is destroyed by Marduk, like the Rephaim under the waters, they “**trembled, terrified**” (*Enuma Elish* 4:105-108).

our Joshua-Revelation typology? The Anakim giants in the days of Joshua and the conquest found throughout that book form the OT parallel to the demons God uses in Revelation.

How are these demons harming? It talks about the **sting like a scorpion**. It is in their tail. But as these are demonic entities, we should probably be thinking of less physical harm (though that can obviously occur), and more **psychological** and **spiritual** harm, like what happens to people when they are possessed.

In this regard, Beale notices that the language is very similar to Jeremiah 8:

Jeremiah 8:16-17, 19	Revelation 9:6-10, 20
<p>Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them ... The snorting of their horses is heard from Dan; at the sound of the neighing of their stallions the whole land quakes. They come and devour the land and all that fills it, the city and those who dwell in it. For behold, I am sending among you serpents, adders that cannot be charmed, and they shall bite you," declares the LORD ... "Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images and with their foreign idols?"</p>	<p>And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them. In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces,⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth;⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle.¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails ... [did not repent of] worshiping demons and idols</p>

The Targum of Jeremiah 8:22 refers to the horse invader as a “**plague**,” and the Jews, who expected Antichrist to come from Dan, used this very passage to prove it (Test. Dan 5:6-7; **Irenaeus**, *Against Heresies* 5.30.2). The association these plagues have to **idol worship in both passages** may then help us to understand that the “sting” comes through deception by false teachers, which is precisely the kind of work John associated with antichrists in his letter (**1Jn 2:18-26; 4:1-3**). “**This is the antichrist ... I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.**” Spiritual deception of a direct and demonic kind is of the very worst kind of torment there is. Spiritual deception leads to absolute ruin.

There are more reasons why this is happening. Consider **the parallel cry of the martyrs**: They cried out, “**How long?**” God is directly answering that fifth seal question with this fifth trumpet answer. **Not forever**, saints! Demonic devouring locusts are stinging your enemies for what they have done. Another reason has to do with **the last verse** of the sixth seal, “**Who can stand?**” (**Rev 6:17**). There is standing here, but not by those who mock God. These Locupions are greatly harming them. But they are not hurting the saints. They are standing. This leads to yet another point. There is **a parallel with Rev 7:3**, which in

some ways is itself a parallel with the fifth seal. Compare: “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads” (Rev 7:3) and “They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” (Rev 9:4).

Revelation 7:3	Revelation 9:4
mē adikēsēte do not hurt	mē adkiēsousin not to hurt
pas chortos all grass	ton chorton the grass
tēn gēn the Land	tēs gēs of the Land
mēte ta dendra or the trees	oude pan dendron nor any tree
achri sphragisōmen until we seal	tēn sphragida the seal
epi tōn metōpōn autōn on their foreheads	epi tōn metōpōn on the foreheads ³⁶

Now, as usual, we may want to figure out a time period for all this. There is one time period given here. It is “five months” (Rev 9:5, 10). This is simply the normal life cycle of a locust.³⁷ But Gentry notices this is not as short a time as

³⁶ Chart reduplicated from Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *The Divorce of Israel: A Redemptive-Historical Interpretation of Revelation* (Dallas, GE: Tolle Lege Press, forthcoming), 732.

³⁷ “This limitation is due to the fact noticed by Bochart (*Hieroz.* iii. 339), that the natural locust is born in the spring and dies at the end of the summer, and thus lives about five months in all.”

you might think, for *infestations* of locusts in any one area only last *a few days* before they move on. Here, however, the plague is continuous on everyone for the entire lifetime of the creatures.³⁸ As a **preterist**, he takes this to parallel the five-month siege of Jerusalem by Titus. Furthermore, those Christians who listened to Jesus were not in the city when it was destroyed and so they escaped final destruction, just as the Christians here cannot be killed or even harmed. No, this trumpet blasts against unbelievers.

However, it seems to me that if this is a **demonic horde**, and if demons do not actually die (they already died once) after five months, then the symbolism can't be contained to merely 70 AD. Rather, God sends out the demons for periods of time to **harm unbelievers** throughout the church age. Has this not proven true for 2,000 years? **Historicists**, for example, see this fulfilled in the Islamic invasion of the West. The five months are 150 years (reading the number symbolically) from 612 to the removal of the Caliphate to Baghdad in 762.³⁹ But surely there have been many more dark demonic days in history than that. **Futurists** often view this as some kind of literal five-month period of a future

R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, vol. 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1920), 243.

³⁸ Gentry, 733.

³⁹ See Vern Poythress, *The Returning King* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2000), 28.

judgment before the end of days or the millennium. Hendriksen combines these all and asks, “Can you conceive of a more frightful and horrible and true(!) picture of the operation of the power of darkness in the soul of the wicked during this present age.”⁴⁰

Both physical and spiritual torment accompanies demonic activity in the Bible. Rarely does it lead to death. And here, it does not either. It just torments. It causes a soul often to *want* to die. As one possible center of our passage says, “They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them” (Rev 9:5-6).

The main parallel in John’s Gospels give us a good final thought. Is this something you want to live through, demonic influences in your life causing you to despair to the end? In my view, we are living in days with increasing and scary demonic activity. It is everywhere for those with eyes to see. There is a way set before you where this need not be your fate. We have just read that men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee

⁴⁰ William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961), 147.

from them. In the parallel, Jesus told the Jews, “I am going away, and you will *seek me*, and you will *die* in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.’ So the Jews said, ‘Will he *kill* himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?” (Jn 8:21-22)

The answer, of course, is that Jesus would not kill himself. Rather, they would kill him (8:40, 18:4-8), but only (as in Revelation 9) under his own authority and sovereignty. But though they killed him, he arose victorious from the grave, having pillaged the very gates of hell and taken the keys with him. After he rose, he ascended into heaven where no man can go by himself.

He ascended that he might send the Holy Spirit who seeks out those given to him by the Father that he might save them! When he seeks you, then you become one of his disciples. And it is as he tells them, “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come’” (John 13:33).⁴¹ Peter wanted, like all true disciples, to follow his Lord (36) saying even, “I will lay down my life for you” (37). Jesus told him that no, he would actually deny his Lord three times (39).

⁴¹ Gage does not see this parallel, but it is in the place where it should be.

But **the hope is not in our ability**, in our doing good for God. Peter was actually filled by Satan at that moment of smug self-effort. It is in God doing good for us through Christ. So Jesus continues immediately after deflating Peter's strong ego, "**Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me**" (14:1), for in his Father's house are many rooms and he goes to prepare a place for all whom he calls, even one who would deny him. They asked, "**Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?**" (5). And Jesus responded, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**" (6). Follow Jesus himself and you will be saved from the plagues God sends to torment mankind for their rebellion against him and their treatment of the saints. Do not follow the Lorpions back down the shaft of the abyss. For this is not a place anyone wants to be. Nor need you go. For it is a place that has been conquered by the Savior who has the keys of Death and Hades and who offers to you now the way to the Tree of Life through faith, because he has conquered Death and Hell through his resurrection from the grave.

John-Revelation Parallel Correspondence Chart

8:21–22 “you will **seek** Me, and *where I go you cannot come* (i.e., you will not find Me); You will **die** in your sins ... (they) said, ‘Will He kill Himself?’ ”

9:6 “men will **seek** death, and *will not find it*; they will desire to **die**, and death will flee from them”

John-Revelation Inverse Parallel Correspondence Chart

13:33 “*Little Children, yet a little while I am with you. You will **seek** me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’”*

9:6 “Me will **seek** death, and will not find it.”

14:1–2 “*Let not your heart be troubled ... in My Father’s house are many dwelling places”*

7:15, 17 “He shall spread *His tabernacle* upon them ... and God shall *wipe every tear from their eyes.*”

14:6 “I am the **way**, the truth, and the life.”

7:17 “the Lamb ... shall **guide** them ...”

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