

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. Revelation 9:1*

As I study through the scriptures, there are many passages in the Bible, that cause me great consternation and leave me puzzled as to the exact meaning of them. This is no where any more starkly manifested than in a perusal of the book of the Revelation. There are a multitude of so called teachers and prophets down through the ages and especially in the present day who have "discovered" all of the answers for us, if we will just listen to them.

They know the meaning of every hair on the tail of the white horse and the significance of each toenail on the beast which rises from the sea. They can tell us an exact timeline of the occurrence of all events which are yet to unfold in the history of this earth. Times and seasons, and the rise and fall of this kingdom or that are their specialties and they are able to keep their audiences (or readers) in rapt attention as they describe what the "mark of the beast is", when the "antichrist" is going to break upon the scene, or how to avoid the "great tribulation".

They consider their wild speculations to be matters of fact and have chapter and verse to "prove it", along with their carnal explanations of deep mysteries which they can unfold to the willing listener if they will but "support" their "ministry" with a love gift or at least purchase their books at a very reasonable price, considering the "depth" of their study and their willingness to impart these jewels of wisdom as they make merchandise of men.

The LORD has not sent HIS preachers into the earth to make a "profit" but rather to be "prophets" of a message which has but one SUBJECT, which is the glory of JESUS CHRIST, unfolded in HIS redemptive work in the behalf of those whom HE has loved from before the foundation of the world. As Paul said, "*According to the glorious gospel (i.e.; gospel of the glory) of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*" (1Tim 1:11)

Of this gospel which was committed to his trust he said, "*For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.*" (1Thes 2:9) This is but an expansion of that which he told the Corinthians concerning the necessity that he had to declare the gospel without a consideration of being paid to do so. "*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*" (1Cor 9:16-19)

So as we look at this particular passage before us, I do not claim to decipher every bit of meaning of this "key to the bottomless pit" nor do I consider my understanding of this passage to be sacrosanct and the end of the discussion. I do believe this ONE to whom the key to the bottomless pit was given to be none other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Now it is true that

this particular passage could be speaking of another individual, though I am of the opinion that it is CHRIST. I had rather see CHRIST where HE is not, than to miss HIM where HE is. Of this I am certain, and that is that this whole book is the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST. HE is the central figure in it all and the unfolding of HIS glory is its purpose.

Many approach this book as though it is exactly "chronological" according to the carnal understanding of men, or that it reveals a certain "timetable" of future events. I would not deny that, in every sense, but it does seem to my limited understanding that this book is more accurately viewed as a manifestation of the work of CHRIST from various perspectives.

The opening of the seventh seal was done by the only ONE in heaven or earth, who had the power or right to open it. *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."* (Rev 5:9) *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12) This seventh seal is the last one to be opened. There is no further work of CHRIST to be accomplished for HE has finished HIS work of redemption, and yet merely awaits the moment when HE shall make manifest HIS purchased possession to the creation.

This fifth angel (out of seven angels or messengers under the seventh seal) who "sounded" (i.e.; blew his trumpet) marked the "fall" of a STAR from heaven according to the testimony of John. The LORD JESUS CHRIST was not "cast out" of heaven but rather willingly condescended to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh in order that HE might effect the redemption of HIS bride. *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (the exact same death which every man is subject to)"* (Heb 2:9) *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."* (Php 2:6-9)

John tells us that he saw a "STAR" fall from heaven. *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."* (Rev 22:16) CHRIST JESUS is the STAR of heaven, HE is the ONE, around whom, all creation revolves, and the SOURCE of all LIGHT and LIFE. Some tell us that this star, spoken of here, must be Satan; yet, Satan has not been given the "key" to the bottomless pit for HE is put there by HIM who does have the key. Satan can do nothing that is not ordained by the ALMIGHTY, who is not ashamed to ascribe to HIMSELF the acts of calamity and evil which have befallen the sons of Adam as we read in Isaiah 45:7 and are carried out by the angel (messenger) of the bottomless pit, (Apollyon; or Satan) as he seeks their harm; but, is unable to touch even one hair of those who have the seal of GOD in their foreheads.

This "bottomless pit" is a place of everlasting destruction and is the final abode of Satan, when the LORD is through with him according to HIS purpose, as well as all of those who are not found written in the book of LIFE. Satan has no power to cast men into that pit, to release any from it, or to escape it himself, so he most certainly does not have its key. *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."* (Rev 1:18) *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* (Mat 10:28)

May we ever worship HIM who has the key to the bottomless pit. *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me."* (Deu 32:39-41) *"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."* (Psa 2:12)