

41. The Book of Revelation—9:2-12

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(5-12-21)

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In our study of the Book of Revelation we have just entered into Chapter 9.

Once again by way of a quick review—so far, we have seen Jesus open the 7-Seal Judgments—the 7th Seal unleashed the 7-Trumpet Judgments which we began to look at in Chapter 8.

Each of the first four trumpet judgments affect the physical universe in some way (vegetation, oceans/seas, fresh water, and a third of the light of the sun, moon and stars)—but with the sounding of the *fifth* trumpet the focus shifts from the *physical* to the *spiritual* realm.

The *fifth* and *sixth* Trumpet Judgments unleash upon the inhabitants of the earth *demonic* judgments so horrific—that it is hard for us to comprehend what it will be like for people living on the earth at that time.

Revelation 9:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

“...a star fallen from heaven to the earth” is not another meteor falling to the earth (8:8) because *personality* is ascribed to this ‘star’ by use of the personal pronoun “him”—“**To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.**”

Angels are referred to as ‘stars’ in the Bible (Job 38:7)—this one falls from heaven to the earth (the Greek in verse 1 is actually “**has**” or “**had fallen.**”).

So in other words, John is saying—“**I saw a star that had fallen to the earth.**”

I believe that this is none other than Satan himself—[Jesus] said to them, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven...*” (Luke 10:18 NKJV)

John tells us that Satan (?) is *given* the key to the bottomless pit (abysos).

This tells us that Satan doesn’t *control* this key—it had to be *given* to him by the Lord Jesus Who alone holds the keys of Death and Hades (Revelation 1:18).

Revelation 9:2 (NKJV)

² And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

Out of the shaft to the bottomless pit there comes a polluting smoke that covers the earth like a shroud, blocking out the light of the sun—which is fitting.

It is fitting, because as Jesus said, “*Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil*” so God gives them darkness—but that’s not all...

Revelation 9:3-4 (NKJV)

³Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

These “locusts” that crawl out of the abyss—are not allowed to harm (feed upon) any grass or any green vegetation or trees—but only *people* who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Locusts are known for their ability to strip the earth of all green vegetation—

One author noted—

“Locust swarms consume all vegetation in their path. The scene is reminiscent of the locust plague in Egypt (Exodus 10:4–5, 12–20), and of the description of the locust plague in Joel 1:1–7; 2:1–5, but far worse. The imagery of the smoke is an apt depiction of a locust plague, since millions of the grasshopper-like insects’ swarm so thickly that they can darken the sky and blot out the sun, turning day into night. Locust swarms can be unimaginably huge (cf. Psalm. 105:34); one swarm over the Red Sea in 1889 was reported to have covered 2,000 square miles. The destruction they can cause to crops and other vegetation is staggering (cf. 2 Chronicles 7:13).

John Phillips writes:

“The worst locust plague in modern times struck the Middle East in 1951–52 when in Iran, Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia every green and growing thing was devoured across hundreds of thousands of square miles. Locusts eat grain, leaf, and stalk, right down to the bare ground. When a swarm arises and flies on its way, the green field is left a desert; barrenness and desolation stretches as far as eye can see.”

So, locusts can eat a lot of vegetation in their path—since these locusts don’t touch any green tree or grass or vegetation it tells us—these are not natural locusts.

So what are they?—I believe that these are supernatural demonic locusts.

How do we know that?—Because they come from the abyss (the place demons are imprisoned—Luke 8:30-31; Jude 1:6; 2 Peter 2:4); and these ‘**locusts**’ have a king over them—

Revelation 9:11 (NKJV)

¹¹And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Proverbs 30:27 (NKJV)

²⁷The locusts [i.e., ‘natural locusts’] have no king yet they all advance in ranks.

This is a demonic army of locust like creatures because they have a demonic king over them.

There is an interesting verse in Amos 7:1 as recorded in the ASV (American Standard Version of 1901)—

Amos 7:1 (ASV)

¹ Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me: and, behold, he formed locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king’s mowings.

“What in the world does that mean?”—I have absolutely no idea! This verse doesn’t make any sense! Our Old Testament translation of the Hebrew is taken from the Masoretic Text—which dates back to about 900 A.D.

But the Septuagint (the translation of the Hebrew into the Greek)—is roughly 1200 years earlier (i.e., the third century before Christ and closer to the original manuscripts) and in the Septuagint it reads—*“The Lord has shown me and behold a swarm of locusts were coming and behold one of the young devastating locusts was Gog the king.”*

The name ‘Gog’ is used 11 times in Ezekiel 38 & 39 and once in Revelation 20—

Revelation 20:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

It could be that the same demon (Abaddon/Apollyon—‘Gog’) that leads this army of locust demons will possess the leader of this final battle spoken of in Revelation 20—we’ll take a closer look at this when we get there!

Revelation 9:4 (NKJV)

⁴ **They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**

Let me stop and say that skeptics point out that in Chapter 8:7 we read that all the green grass was burned up in the first trumpet judgment—so how could these locusts be commanded not to touch the green grass when it has already been destroyed?

Grass after a fire grows back quickly and there is obviously some time that has elapsed between the events of Chapter 8:7 and Chapter 9:4. Those who have the seal of God on their foreheads is a reference to the 144,000 Jews sealed from God’s judgment in Chapter 7:3-4.

There may have been others sealed at that time or possibly when each person gets saved during the Tribulation Period they are instantly sealed on their foreheads from God’s judgment upon the wicked.

Revelation 9:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ **And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for five months.* Their torment *was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.* ⁶ **In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.****

Verse 6 has to be one of the most bizarre verses in the Bible!

For these 5 months God will not allow death—or as someone has said, *“For these 5 months—death will take a holiday!”* Even though the pain from these demonic locusts with scorpion stings will be so horrific that people will desire to die.

They will writhe in agony and be obsessed with death, and will try to take their own lives—but God will not allow their spirits to leave their bodies—for 5 months. I don’t believe this is a cruelty on God’s part but actually a form of mercy—how so?

What would you rather endure—some of the pain of hell for 5 months—or to be cast into real hell with all its pain and torment for all eternity?

Often we hear people make the claim—*“Hell isn’t a real place—hell is right here man, that’s it!”*

Well, I can imagine for some people that life on earth can sometimes *seem* like hell—but the Bible assures us that hell is a real place and for 5 months—“*hell comes to the earth*” and God will not allow people to die. It’s hard to imagine what life will be like for the people of the earth who have been stung by one of these demon creatures and wants to die, tries to die—but can’t die!

I mean think about it—for five months when someone puts a gun to their head, pulls the trigger and blows half their head off—they won’t die! Or jumps off a tall building, hits the ground and breaks every bone in their body—but doesn’t die!

“Yes, but why does God have to so torment people like this?”

It’s because that by this time people have hardened their hearts so much to God that extreme measures are needed to break them (even though I don’t believe many will still be able to receive Jesus by this time in the great tribulation judgments of God—the majority of the earth’s population having committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit).

It’s interesting that in hell people will want to die to escape the torment but they won’t be able to die because—they’re already dead! So, for these 5 months God will bring the same thing to the earth to give people a taste of hell on earth—so that they will repent of their sins and escape the real hell.

Isaiah 26:9 (NKJV)

⁹ ...For when Your judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

It seems that after the 5 months, these demon locust creatures will have to return to the bottomless pit (abysos). That’s interesting because the normal lifespan of an actual locust is about five months (May to September)—and that this will be the length of time God will allow these demon locusts to remain upon the earth.

During this time people will no doubt pray—they will pray to God to make it stop—but most of them won’t repent—

Revelation 9:20 (NKJV)

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.

(Talk about those who say, “*I’m going to wait to see if all you Christians get raptured and then I’ll receive Jesus during the Tribulation Period...*”)

Revelation 9:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸ They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ *teeth*. ⁹ And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. ¹⁰ They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.

One commentator says—

“The repetition of “like” indicates something other than a literal description is intended; the total impact of this picture is one of unnatural, demonic horror.”

Putting together verses 7-10—many commentators try to interpret this as some kind of military weaponry—but again, I firmly believe that this is some kind of demon army. It’s interesting that even real locusts (if you look at them closely)—resemble horses wearing armor.

The word for ‘locust’ in German is a word that means ‘hay horse’, and in Italian the word means ‘little horse.’

There is a prophecy in Joel 2 that has this section in Revelation 9 in view—a terrifying look at what’s coming upon the world:

Joel 2:1-11 (NKJV)

¹ Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: ² A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains. A people *come*, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any *such* after them, Even for many successive generations. ³ A fire devours before them, And behind them a flame burns; The land *is* like the Garden of Eden before them, And behind them a desolate wilderness; Surely nothing shall escape them. ⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run. ⁵ With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap, Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array. ⁶ Before them the people writhe in pain; All faces are drained of color. ⁷ They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war; Every one marches in formation, And they do not break ranks. ⁸ They do not push one another; Every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, They are not cut down. ⁹ They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief. ¹⁰ The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness. ¹¹ The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong *is the One* who executes His word. For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; Who can endure it?

- *Historically*, the prophecy of Joel 2 was fulfilled in Joel’s day when Israel was besieged with natural locusts.
- *Prophetically*, the locusts speak of the demons that will be released from the abyss in Revelation 9.

But nestled among the dire warnings of this terrible invasion is a wonderful promise—

Joel 2:25-26 (NKJV)

²⁵ "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. ²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame. (Explain)

Revelation 9:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.**

John notes that his name in Hebrew is “**Abaddon**” (“Destruction”), and in the Greek he has the name “**Apollyon**” (“The Destroyer”)—John uses both names to emphasize his impact on both ungodly Jews and Gentiles.

Just who is this angel? – Some identify this angel as *Satan* himself—but Satan isn’t bound yet in the abyss and is free to roam the earth working his evil deeds as the “*god of this world*” and the “*prince of the power of the air.*” (Ephesians 2:2)

He is not associated with the abyss until he is cast into it (20:1–3)—this angel is better viewed as a high-ranking fallen angel in Satan’s hierarchy.

Revelation 9:12 (NKJV)

¹² One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

So, the 5th Trumpet Judgment also known as the “**first woe**” is now complete—unfortunately, the worst is yet to come.

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