

The Fifth Trumpet (Pt.2)
Revelation 9:4-12
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INTRODUCTION

1. In our last time together in the book of Revelation, we were studying *the fifth trumpet* found in Revelation chapter 9.
2. Please take your Bibles and turn with me to Revelation chapter 9 as we look, once again, at *the fifth trumpet*.
3. In our study Wednesday evening of 1 Thessalonians we found ourselves in chapter 5 with the subject of *the Day of the Lord*. I want to remind you that we are currently studying the details of the wrath of God as we find them in the book of Revelation.
4. In fact this will be our subject all the way to chapter 19, so we have 10 more chapters that address this period of the seventh seal called *the Day of the Lord*.
5. Read Revelation 9:1-12
6. In chapter 8:1 we saw the opening of the seventh seal.
7. When that seal was opened John says, “There was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (v.1).
8. Previously all of the hosts of heaven were involved in praise to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.
9. But now everything stops in anticipation of the events of the 7th seal.

10. John says that he “saw...seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” (vv.2-6).
11. The first angel sounds in verse 7 and “hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.”
12. The second angel sounds in verses 8-9 “And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood; and a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.”
13. The third angel sounds in verses 10-11 and “a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water; and the name of the star is Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.”
14. The fourth angel sounds in verse 12 and “a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened; and a third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.”

15. Then John says he “looked, and...heard an angel [eagle] flying through the midst of heaven saying with a loud voice, ‘Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound’ (v.13).

16. And now we come to the blast of the fifth trumpet which the angels prepares to sound. This is the first “woe” that the eagle mentions and we see *the pit unlocked* in verses 1-2.

I. The Pit Unlocked (vv.1-2)

A. When the Fifth Angel Sounded His Trumpet, John Saw a Star Fallen from Heaven to the Earth (v.1a)

1. This was not an inanimate piece of celestial matter but an angelic being
2. As we said last time this is a reference to the fall of Satan

Jesus said of his fall in Luke 10:18, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

B. Following His Fall, John Says Satan was Given the Key to the Bottomless Pit (v.1b)

1. The key represents “authority” and this angel (Satan) is given authority to unlock the pit.
2. We also saw last time that according to Revelation 1:18 that Jesus is the One who has the “keys of Hades and of Death.” It is He who gives Satan the key to the bottomless pit.
3. The bottomless pit as it is described here is literally “the shaft of the abyss.” Scripture teaches that God has sovereignly chosen to incarcerate certain demons in that pit of punishment – We saw that in 2 Pet.2:4 and Jude 1:6-7.

C. After this Pit is Unlocked or Opened Smoke Comes From it (v.2)

This is such a vast volume of smoke that “the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit”

And out of the vast, billowing cloud of smoke that darkened the sky and caused panic among earth's inhabitants John saw a new terror emerge.

II. The Power Unleashed (vv.3-6)

A. Vile Demons Taking on a Visible Form as Locust Swarm Out of the Abyss (v.3)

1. The scene here is reminiscent of the locust plague on Egypt and is an apt illustration 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
2. What John writes about in verse 3 refers to no ordinary locusts, but demons, who like the locusts, bring swarming destruction

“In this judgment God brings demons into direct contact with the unrepentant people with whom they will spend forever in the lake of fire” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.260).

B. Strict Limitations were Placed on Activities of this Demonic Host (vv.4-6)

This judgment, unlike the first four trumpets judgments, is not on the physical world. “Since the first four trumpets focused on nature, the final three trumpets will focus on humanity directly” (The Revelation Commentary).

1. God commanded them “not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree”

“The reference to the *grass of the earth* suggests that some time has passed since the first trumpet judgments scorched all the grass that was then in season (8:7). The damaged grass has grown again and is to remain untouched in this plague, indicating that enough time has elapsed for a partial recovery of the earth’s environment” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.260).

2. They were commanded to harm men (vv.4-6)
 - a) John mentions even a limitation in this: They were to “harm” “only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads” (v.4)
 - (1) Believers will be preserved, just as God sheltered Israel from the effects of the Egyptian plagues (Ex.9:22ff; 9:4ff; 10:23)
 - (2) Those who have *the seal of God* include not only the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (7:3-4; 14:1), but also the rest of the redeemed
 - (a) Rev.2:17 - white stone - new name
 - (b) Rev.3:5 - will not blot out his name
 - (c) Rev.3:12 - write on him My name
 - (d) Rev.22:3-4 - His name on their foreheads
 - (e) 2 Tim.2:19 - “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of

Christ depart from iniquity.”

“The seal marks them as personally belonging to God and as such protected from the forces of hell” (MacArthur).

- (f) Ezek.9:4-6 illustrates the truth that God protects His people in the midst of judgment. God commanded an angel to go through Jerusalem and put a mark on the redeemed. Those who did not have that mark were subject to death when the city fell to the Babylonians.

“The Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the temple.”

- b) Specifically speaking of their commanded mission, John says in verse 5 that “they were

not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.”

“Even what the demons can do to the unregenerate is limited” (MacArthur). They can “torment” them but not “kill them.”

“Torment” Gr.basanizo, “To torment by physical torment” (Rev.Comm.), “the word has the idea of punishment” (Mounce).

“Torment” describes punishment in Revelation (11:10; 14:10-11; 18:7,10,15; 20:10; the only exception is 12:2; “pain” is the same Greek word elsewhere translated “torment”).

- (1) The time span of this judgment is five months

“Torment them for five months”

“This period has been variously explained. It may have been determined by the life cycle of the locust, which is of five months’ duration” (usually from May to September) (Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, p.195).

- (2) The torment is “like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man” (vv.5-6)

“Scorpions' stings were among the most intense pains (1 Kings 12:11; 2 Chron

10:14); but a pain lasting five months was unheard-of. Jewish texts often included scorpions as one of God's means of judgment" (Craig Keener, IVP Bible Background Commentary: NT).

The phrase "when it strikes a man" only happens when they are cornered but again this demonic locust-like horde is commanded to "torment" unbelievers.

Verse 6 tells us that the "torment" inflicted on unbelievers in those day will be so intense that "men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them."

David Jeremiah says, "Imagine the agony when some attempt suicide, but find it impossible. The gun doesn't fire, the poison is ineffective, the leap from a tall building is interrupted by a net!" (Escape the Coming Night, p.129).

III. The Appearance Unveiled (vv.7-10)

Up to this point we have learned of the origin and mission of the demonic locusts. Now John describes them.

Remember they are described as locusts because they bring massive, devastating, rapid judgment from God, but their exaggerated, terrifying features reveal them unlike any locust, scorpion, or any other creature ever before seen on earth.

Also notice that John can only give us an approximation of

what this formidable spiritual army looked like, as we see by the repeated use of the terms “like” (used 8 times in this passage: 3 times in verse 7; 2 times in verse 8; 2 times in verse 9; 1 time in verse 10).

A. Their General Appearance (v.7a)

“And the *shape* (homoioma, “likeness”) of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle.”

Marvin Vincent says, "The likeness of a locust to a horse, especially to a horse equipped with armor, is so striking that the insect is named in German Heupferd hay-horse, and in Italian cavaletta little horse" (Vincent's Word Studies of the NT).

So these demon locust “were warlike, powerful, and defiant, like horses straining at the bit and pawing the ground in their eagerness to charge forward on their mission of death” (MacArthur).

B. Their Specific Appearance (vv.7b-10)

“Kiddle is probably right in saying that ‘John’s account is so straightforward and vivid that comment is superfluous” (Quoted by Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, p.196).

1. On their heads John saw what appeared to be crowns like gold (v.7b)

The crowns they wore are called *stephanoi*, the victors’ crowns, indicating that the demon host will be invincible, unstoppable, and all-conquering.

“Men will have no weapon that can harm them and

no cure for the terrible torment they inflict”
(MacArthur).

2. Their faces were like the faces of men (v.7c)

This indicates they are intelligent, rational beings, not actual insects.

3. They had hair like women’s hair (v.8a)

While Jeremiah 51:27 describes locusts as having bristles like hair, the description of their hair as being like the hair of women more like emphasizes their seductiveness.

John MacArthur says, “The glory or beauty of a woman is her hair, which she may decorate to become more alluring. Like the Sirens of Greek mythology, these locuslike demons will lure people to their doom” (Revelation 1-11, p.263).

4. Their teeth were like lions’ teeth (v.8b)

Since they have teeth like lions’ teeth, they will be far more fierce, powerful, and deadly than lions, ripping and tearing apart their victims.

5. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron (v.9a)

This is designed to protect the vital organs and preserve the life of the soldier, here symbolizes their invulnerability. They will be impossible to resist or destroy.

6. The sound of their wings was like the sound of

chariots with many horses running into battle
(v.9b)

John, like the prophet Joel (Joel 2:4-5), compares the sound of their wings to a moving army which means there will be no escaping their massive, worldwide onslaught; nowhere to run or hide.

7. They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. And their power was to hurt men five months (v.10)

Their sole mission is stressed by their appearance in verse 7 – “their power was to hurt men five months.”

Robert Mounce says these “Long-haired, horse-shaped, flying locusts with scorpion tails and golden crowns above human faces marred by lion’s teeth...have to be reckoned among the more bizarre creatures in the Apocalypse. The total impact is one of unnatural and awesome cruelty” (The Book of Revelation, p.195).

Another point to note is that this five month period “will be one of intense spiritual and physical suffering inflicted on unbelievers by the judgment of God through the demon horde...Unbelievers will also hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ preached by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the two witnesses, and other believers. The five months will be for many people the last opportunity to repent and believe, before they die or are premanently hardened in their unbelief (9:20-21; 16:9,11)” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.261).

IV. The Prince Unmasked (v.11)

Unlike real locusts (cf. Prov.30:27), the demons had a “king over them” (v.11).

A. The Angel of the Bottomless Pit (v.11a)

1. John gives the title of this “king” as “the angel of the abyss”
2. Some identify this angel as Satan, the “star” who had the key to the bottomless pit in verse 1 but at this point his domain is the heavenlies (Eph.6:12) where he is “the prince and power of the air” (Eph.2:2). He is not associated with the abyss until he is cast into it in 20:1-3.
3. This angel is better viewed as a high-ranking demon in Satan’s hierarchy

B. The Angel is Identified By His Name (v.11b)

1. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon

Abaddon is used in the Old Testament to describe the place of eternal punishment.

- a) Ps.88:11 says, “Shall your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of *destruction*?”
- b) Prov.15:11 says, “Hell and *Destruction* are before the Lord; so how much more the hearts of the sons of men.”
- c) Prov.27:20 says, “Hell and *Destruction* are

never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.”

2. His name in Greek is Apollyon

Apollyon comes from the Greek verb *apollumi*, which means “I destroy.”

Both of these terms identify this leader as the king of the demonic death squad.

V. One Woe is Past Still Two More Woes Coming (v.12)

Having described the first woe (8:13 - the fifth trumpet judgment), John cautions that God’s wrath has not run its course. Two woes (the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments, including all the bowl judgments) are still coming after these things.

Phillips’ translation catches the vividness of scene, “The first disaster is now past, but I see two more approaching.”

So there will be nothing more than a brief sigh of relief before still more fearful judgments follow on those “who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom.1:18).

CONCLUSION

1. What can be said of these things? One word, “repent!”
2. The only way to escape this horrible day is to repent and turn your life over to Jesus NOW.
3. John the Baptist said to “Flee the wrath that is to come.”
4. The only way to flee is to fall into the arms of Jesus.

5. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).