

The Fifth Trumpet (Pt.1)
Revelation 9:1-3
Dr. Steven R. Hereford

INTRODUCTION

1. In our last time together we looked at the first four trumpets found in Revelation chapter 8.
2. This morning I want to invite you to join with me in Revelation chapter 9 as we look at *The Fifth Trumpet*.
3. Some have called this trumpet “Hell on earth” (MacArthur).
4. Read Revelation 9:1-12.
5. Our world, where the story of redemption is played out, is the main battleground where Satan and his demonic hosts have attacked the human race, the holy angels, the elect, and God.
6. Satan launched his first assault in the Garden of Eden, where he successfully tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God.
7. The disastrous consequences were that “sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom.5:12).
8. After the Fall, God graciously promised a Savior who would come to destroy Satan and deliver people from his power (Gen.3:15).
9. Satan countered by sending demons to cohabitate with human women, attempting to produce a hybrid

demon/human race of people for whom Jesus could not atone (Gen.6:1-4).

10. In response, God destroyed that race and the whole sinful world with a universal flood – which was the single greatest catastrophe the earth has yet to see.
11. From the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry, Satan fought with all his impotent fury against the Lord Jesus Christ.
12. He tempted Him for forty days seeking to turn Him aside from the work His Father sent Him to accomplish.
13. He instigated a long relentless war against Him by the Jewish leaders, whom Jesus identified as belonging to the family of the devil (Jn.8:44).
14. He even tried to destroy the faith of the apostle Peter by bringing Peter to fear and denial of his Lord on three occasions (Lk.22:34,54-61), but Peter repented (Lk.22:62) and was restored (Jn.21:15-23) to become the great preacher on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14ff).
15. At the end of Jesus’ ministry, “Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve” (Lk.22:3), who then betrayed Jesus into the hands of His murderers.
16. Satan has also set his assault against the church.
17. Shortly after its founding, Satan himself prompted Ananias and his wife Sapphira to corrupt the church by lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3).
18. The couple’s foolish, sinful, and hypocritical attempt to impress others with their spirituality ended when God put

them to death before the whole congregation (Acts 5:5-11).

19. Satan also battled the apostle Paul, hindering him from visiting the Thessalonian church (1 Thess.2:18) and tormenting him with “a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan” (2 Cor.12:7).
20. Satan also attacks the church by bringing unbelievers into it, mixing his tares among the God’s wheat (Mat.13:38-39), blinding the minds of unbelievers so that they reject the Gospel (2 Cor.4:4) and seeking to overwhelm believers with temptation, persecution, and discouragement (1 Pet.5:8).
21. God sovereignly allows and oversees all of Satan’s assaults and fulfills His purposes in spite of them and through them. Satan is the servant of God.
22. In the future, Satan will serve God’s purpose by being permitted to launch another deadly assault against the human race.
23. That attack will come at the sounding of the fifth trumpet.
24. While the destruction caused by the first four trumpet judgments will be catastrophic, the remaining three will be far worse.
25. That was the sobering message we saw last time given by “an eagle flying in midheaven” (8:13).
26. He proclaimed a threefold message of woe (one for each of the final three trumpets) on “those who dwell on the earth” (8:13).
27. Each of the first four trumpet judgments affect the physical universe in some way, but with the sounding of the fifth

trumpet the focus will shift from the physical to the spiritual realm.

28. There are four scenes that unfold in chapter 9 as the fifth trumpet is sounded.
29. This morning we will look at the first and the start of the second scene.
30. **In the first scene we see *the pit unlocked*.**

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. In his visions, John had already seen several heavenly bodies plunge to the earth (6:13; 8:8, 10)
2. The “star” that has fallen from heaven to the earth in this scene is not an inanimate piece of celestial matter but an angelic being
 - a) John uses a personal pronoun when referring to this “star” when he says, “And to him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit” (vv.1-2)
 - b) Job 38:7 uses the word “star” when referring to angels
 - c) Rev.12:4 calls the angels who fell with Satan “the stars of heaven”
 - d) In fact, one of the names for Satan is “Lucifer,” which means “brightness” (Wiersbe)

Craig Keener says, “Most pagans held stars to be divinities, and many Jews held them to be angels; stars could naturally symbolize angels in Jewish texts, as in this case” (The IVP Bible Background Commentary).

- e) John says that he saw this “star” fallen from heaven to the earth and this suggests a reference to Satan – the leader of the fallen

angels [the word “fallen” is in the perfect tense which signifies completed action]

- (1) Isa.14:12-15 describes his fall
- (2) Ezek.28:12-19 also gives a description of his fall
- (3) Jesus said in Luke 10:18, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”
- (4) Satan’s access to heaven will have an end. Revelation 12:7-9 describes the unsuccessful battle that he and his demonic host have with Michael and the holy angels
- (5) With his operations now restricted to the earth, his time is running out (12:12).
- (6) He will seek to rally all of his demonic hosts – those already on earth and those incarcerated in the bottomless pit

B. John Says To Him was Given the Key to the Bottomless Pit (v.1b)

1. The key represents “authority”
2. This angel is given the authority to unlock the pit

Marvin Vincent says, “It is not however a pit that is locked, but the long shaft leading to the abyss, like a well-shaft, which, in the East, is oftener covered and locked” (Word Studies in the NT).

3. According to Revelation 1:18 Jesus is the One who

has the “keys of Hades and of Death.” He is the One who gives Satan the key to the bottomless pit

4. The “bottomless pit” as it is described here is literally “the shaft of the abyss”
 - a) “bottomless” Gr.abusos appears 7 times in Revelation, always in reference to the place of incarcerated demons (9:2, 11; 11:17; 17:8)
 - b) Satan himself will be held prisoner there during the Millennium, chained and locked up with the other demonic prisoners (20:1, 3)
 - c) Scripture teaches that God has sovereignly chosen to incarcerate certain demons in that pit of punishment
 - (1) 2 Pet.2:4 says, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.”

The phrase “cast them down to hell” is a participle derived from the Greek noun Tartarus

John MacArthur says, “Just as Jesus used a modern term for hell derived from the Jewish vernacular (Gehenna; cf. Mat.5:22), so Peter chose a term from Greek mythology with which his readers would be familiar. Tartarus was the name used in Greek literature for the place where the worst sinners, those who

had offended the gods personally, went after death and were punished. The place where God keeps demons imprisoned is actually different from the imaginary place of Greek mythology. Yet the use of the term Tartarus does seem to convey the idea that because of the heinousness of their sin, God has imprisoned certain fallen angels in such a place of severest torment and isolation. They remain in place, awaiting their sentencing to final punishment in the eternal lake of fire (Rev.20:10, 13-14).

The demons incarcerated in the abyss are undoubtedly the most wicked, vile, and perverted of all the fallen angels” (Revelation 1-11, p.257).

- (2) Jude 1:6-7 says, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

“That passage describes certain fallen angels who left the angelic domain to indulge in sexual sin with humans, just as the men of Sodom and Gomorrah attempted to engage in perverted sex

with angels (Gen.19:1, 4-5).

Peter reveals when this angelic sin occurred: "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. (1 Pet. 3:18-20)

The "spirits now in prison" in the abyss are those "who once were disobedient ... in the days of Noah." They are the demons who cohabited with human women in Satan's failed attempt to corrupt the human race and make it unredeemable (Gen. 6:1-4). That demons still fear being sent to the abyss is evident from the fact that some pled with Jesus not to send them there (Luke 8:31). That suggests that other demons have been incarcerated there since the events of Genesis 6. The demons released by Satan at the fifth trumpet may not include those who sinned in Noah's day (cf. Jude 6), since they are said to be in "eternal bonds" (Jude 6) until the final day when they are sent to the eternal lake of fire (20:10; Jude 7). Other demons imprisoned in the abyss may be the ones

released. So the pit is the preliminary place of incarceration for demons from which some are to be released under this judgment” (John MacArthur, Revelation 1-11, p.258).

After Satan received the key to the abyss from its keeper, the Lord Jesus Christ (1:18), he opened the bottomless pit and released its inmates.

John Philips comments, “Picture what the world would be like if we were to open the doors of all the penitentiaries of earth and set free the world's most vicious and violent criminals, giving them full reign to practice their infamies upon mankind. Something worse than that lies in store for the world. Satan, cast out of heaven, is now permitted to summon to his aid the most diabolical fiends in the abyss to act as his agents in bringing mankind to the footstool of the Beast. (Exploring Revelation, rev. ed.[Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N. J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 125).

C. Smoke Comes from the Pit After it is Opened (v.2)

1. Smoke in Revelation may refer to holy things

- a) Rev.8:4 says, “And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.”
- b) Rev.15:8 says, “The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.”

2. Smoke is usually associated with judgment
 - a) Rev.9:17-18
 - b) Rev.14:11
 - c) Rev.18:9, 18
 - d) Rev.19:3

 - e) Gen.19:28 says of Sodom and Gomorrah:
“Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace.”

 - f) Joel 2:30 says, “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.”

3. In Revelation 9:2 we see such a vast volume of smoke issued from the abyss that “the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.”

John MacArthur says, “The smoke polluting the sky symbolizes the corruption of hell belched forth from the abyss to pollute the world” (Revelation 1-11, p.259).

David Jeremiah adds: “Smoke billows from this prison house of evil, unleashing the soot of hell. A spiritual plague of demonic proportions breaks out upon the whole earth, fueled by the work of millions of demon creatures” (Escape the Coming Night, p.128).

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

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.

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
 - a) Moses said to Pharaoh in Ex.10:4-5 that if he refused “to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field.
 - b) In verses 12-20 it says, “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.” So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. For they covered the face of

the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that He may take away from me this death only." So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go."

2. The imagery of the smoke 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

- a) Locust swarms can be unimaginably huge

Speaking of the plagues on Egypt, Ps.105:34-35 says, "He spoke, and locusts came, Young locusts without number, And ate up all the vegetation in their land, And devoured the fruit of their ground."

One swarm over the Red Sea 1889 was reported to have covered 2,000 square miles.

Last week I was watching the news and heard

how locusts swarmed in the west African nation of Mauritania. I went to News4Jax.com the next day and read this:

“Residents burned tires and trash in the streets Thursday trying to drive off swarms of locusts descending on the region in what a UN agency called the worst sub-Saharan invasion in more than a decade. The flying swarms reached densities of 50 million locust per half square mile and began landing on the Mauritanian capital Wednesday” (News4jax.com, Aug.22, 2004).

- b) The destruction locust can cause to crops and other vegetation is staggering

John Philips 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. (Exploring Revelation, 125-26).

3. What John writes about in verse 3 refers to no ordinary locusts, but demons, who like the locusts, bring swarming destruction
- a) Describing them as locusts symbolizes their uncountable numbers and massive destructive capabilities.

- b) In vv.3,5,10 their “power” to inflict pain is compared to “scorpions” indicates that they are not actual locusts, since locusts have no stinging tail as scorpions do

“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 trumpet judgments, is not on the physical world. In fact, they were told (probably by God, who gave the angel the key to the pit in 9:1, and who controls everything for His purposes) that there were limits.

CONCLUSION

1. We will have to wait until next time to see what these limitations were.
2. But let me suffice it to say it will be the most horrific pain this side of hell.
3. I will say this again as I have been saying since the opening of the seals.
4. Everything will continue to get worse. This trumpet judgment is called the first “woe,” and there are two more “woes” to follow.

5. I want to urge you if you haven't repented of your sin and come to Jesus do so today – judgment is coming and you will not escape God's wrath.
6. Just as Satan and his demonic hosts will not escape the judgment set for them neither will you unless you repent.