

The Fifth Trumpet

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Revelation 9:1-12

Will you take the infallible record of the Word of God and turn to Revelation chapter nine? Revelation chapter nine as we continue to make our way through this amazing unveiling that the Lord has given us.

Let me read the text to you.

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. And he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And they were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death flees from them. And the appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. And they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. And they have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.¹

We return once again to the unveiling of the final events of world history. As I think about this text and our study of the book of Revelation I think again of the age in which we live, an age of fear and confusion, an age of uncertainty. We have Islamic terrorists all around the world today, the threat of weapons of mass destruction, the escalating crisis in the Middle East, a global energy crisis, the failure of economies around the world. And, of course, I am amazed—as I am sure many of you are—to witness the collapse of our country. Educationally, morally, economically we see a deterioration. And, of course, we have a very divided country. Even with the leadership of our country we have basically half of the people that worship the new leader and his administration and the other half that are very distrustful and even despise him.

As I think about what is happening in the world and even what is happening in our country, I am reminded of what was going on in Germany in the late 1920s and the early 30s. The Germans became mesmerized by a new charismatic leader who promised them massive change. History records that he advocated gun control and jobs for the unemployed. He advocated higher wages for the working class and a redistribution of

¹ Revelation 9:1-12.

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wealth to make the whole country more equitable. He proposed health care for everyone. Amazing parallels that we see in our country today and, frankly, in other countries with similar leaders. After seizing complete political control with the help of a compliant media, in the name of justice he indoctrinated youth to have his world view. They were called the *Hitler Youth League of German Worker Youth*. And, of course, this became the important first step in order to enter into the elite SS.

These groups of people wore their brown shirts and would bully and beat political opponents into either silence or submission. It is amazing that within just a few short years that man and those people transformed the most educated cultured country in all of Europe into a living hell, a country that committed atrocities against other human beings that—especially the Jews—that exceed the limits of our imagination.

You know, I used to wonder how the people of Germany could be so thoroughly duped. I don't wonder that any more because I see similar types of things in our country. As my jaw drops almost every time I listen to the news and as my head kind of goes back and forth in dismay, I find myself immediately praising the Lord for two things. Number one, I praise him because I know that he is sovereignly in control of everything and I find great comfort in that, and, secondly, I praise him for his prophetic Word because in it I can see, I can read the constellation of events that will lead up to his Second Coming and I can see that his return could be very, very soon. Certainly his Word is a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet.

Can you imagine, dear friends, not having the prophetic Word? Can you imagine living today like many people do and having absolutely no idea what is going to happen, being solely dependent upon political leaders to somehow rescue us from the problems that the world faces? But because of the Word of God, because of divine revelation we can continue to see how our sovereign God is orchestrating all of the events of human history to accomplish his glorious purposes.

And it is for this reason that we read in Revelation one verse three, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.”²

Before we examine the text before us this morning, I want to remind you that we can see the sovereignty of God on every page of holy writ. Indeed, we see the golden thread of his... of his regal rule woven through every scene, every story that is portrayed in the tapestry of the Bible.

There are many fascinating parallels in Scripture where we see a person or an event or some historical reality picturing some corresponding spiritual truth. Now, this should not be confused with types that prefigure or foreshadow in some preparatory way an antitype. I don't want to get too technical, but I want you to keep the difference here in your mind. A type looks forward to something. A type looks forward to and prefigures the antitype.

² Revelation 1:3.

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Like, for example, the Passover was a type that prefigured Christ and his sacrifice. But an illustration looks back, and in both types as well as illustrations we see the glorious sovereignty of God. In illustrations we see how New Testament truths will point back to some analogous person or situation in the Old Testament and there certain parallels can be drawn. As we examine the exhilarating truths of Bible prophecy we see this over and over again.

For example, as I have told you in days past, we see the chronology of the pre kingdom judgments described in Revelation and we find that there is a parallel to these pre kingdom judgments and that is found in the Old Testament with the first mediatorial kingdom that God established on earth under the divinely authorized rule of Moses.

We can see the seal and trumpet and bowl judgments increase in frequency and severity in the book of Revelation, each giving pause for repentance, but never really bearing the fruit of it. And we can see the same thing when we look back to the 12 plagues that God brought upon Pharaoh. We see the same dynamics.

We can see in the book of Revelation how the antichrist and his armies are one day going to be judged at Armageddon. And, once again, Jehovah will deliver Israel as we read in Revelation 19. We see the same thing as we look back with Pharaoh and his armies when they were defeated and Israel was delivered at the Red Sea.

In Revelation we see Israel who will one day believe in their deliverer, in their Messiah and the nations of the earth will tremble once again. And this parallels Israel's supernatural deliverance that we saw in Egypt in the Exodus when according to Exodus 14:31 they believed the Lord and his servant Moses and then in chapter 15 verses 14 through 17 we read how that the fear of God spread to all of the surrounding Gentile nations.

So we see these illustrations pointing back and the Old Testament pointing forward. In Revelation we read of the saints and the heavenly hosts singing songs of deliverance in victory and we saw this, as well, pictured in Exodus 15 when Moses and the children of Israel witnessed the waters of the Red Sea engulf the pursuing Egyptian charioteers. And we are reminded there of how they sang that inspired psalm of divine deliverance having passed safely to the security of the other side.

Dear friends, only a sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient God could ever write such things as well as accomplish them.

Now we must remember that the apocalypse is preeminently a book of the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God that triumphs over all other kingdoms including—and I should say especially—the satanic kingdom. And these prophetic truths should bring enormous solace to every child of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ goes into great detail in Revelation describing the pre kingdom judgments upon the wicked and the restoration of his covenant people Israel. As he

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prepares them for the messianic age when he will come to rule and to reign as the long promised Messiah king, and it is for this reason that the apocalypse is saturated with Old Testament phraseology. According to Westcott and Hort the great New Testament Greek translators, out of the 404 verses in the book of Revelation, 265 contain Old Testament language with 550 references to Old Testament passages. Therefore, any attempt to interpret this book apart from looking at it through the lens of Old Testament theology would be absolutely ludicrous.

Even the sweeping theme of the coming king described in Revelation finds its parallel in an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, king David. You will recall the shepherd boy David who was later rejected by his brothers; that bears much resemblance to the great shepherd of the sheep who was also temporarily rejected by his brothers. You will recall that after God anointed David as king of Israel he did not immediately occupy the throne, but was despised by a usurper whose regal rights had already been replaced, referring to King Saul. Despite his innocence and his astounding accomplishments as the Lord's servant, for years David was maligned and he was slandered. He was pursued as a criminal in the wilderness by an insanely jealous rival, and during that season of rejection David assembled a small band of faithful followers that knew the truth of who he was and eventually God put an end to the usurpers reign and placed David upon the throne where his band of loyal followers joined him in his kingdom and privileged subjects. Indeed, the parallels of the career of King David can be seen in David's greater Son, the Messiah King, the Lord Jesus Christ who is now gathering for himself a people to reign with him when the usurper, Satan, is one day defeated. Then he will ascend his glorious throne and his promised kingdom.

So, we return, again, to these pre kingdom judgments that will lead to the king's glorious return. And we marvel, once again, at God's sovereign rule over his creation, therefore, as we look at these things we have no reason to fear because we know he is working his plan as he has promised.

Now in order to understand this text in Revelation nine, the first 12 verses, we must examine four things. Number one, the identity of the star. Secondly, the nature of the plague. Thirdly, the characteristics of the locusts and, finally, the nature of their king.

So, join with me as we look at this text. First of all, *the identity of the star*, Revelation nine verse one we read, "Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him."³

Here the term "star," *aster* (as-tare') in Greek, identifies an intelligent being who is cast from heaven to earth and is given this key to the bottomless pit.

Now this must be some kind of angelic being as the term star has been used to signify before, for example, in Job 38 and verse seven God speaks of "the morning stars who sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."⁴

³ Revelation 9:1.

⁴ See Job 38:7.

And when we look at the Greek grammar of this text we can see the phrase “which had fallen” indicates that something happened in the past with continuing results, with a continuing reality. Therefore I believe that what we see in Revelation 12—as I will read in a moment—combined with what we find in Isaiah 14, I believe that the record of evidence would tell us that this is a reference to Satan of whom God said in Isaiah 14:12:

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the
nations! "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise
my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.' "Nevertheless you will be thrust
down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.⁵

Now this describes Satan’s original banishment from the abode of heaven although God has continued to give him access into his presence. And I want you to keep that in mind. In fact, we learn of this in the conversation that Satan had with God regarding Job in Job one and also in Zechariah chapter three and verse one we read of Joshua the high priest who stood before the Lord with Satan standing at the right which was the place of accusation under the law. In fact, in Revelation 12 and verse 10 Satan is described as, quote, “the accuser of our brethren [who] has been thrown down, [he] who accuses them before our God day and night.”⁶

So, again, I believe the weight of evidence for identifying the star as Satan can be seen in this very context in Revelation 12. I believe what John is seeing is what is further described later on in Revelation 12 beginning in verse seven and here is what we read there.

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the
dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not
strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.
And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called
the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down
to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.⁷

And then in verse 12 we read, “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”⁸

Now, I want you to notice how God uses Satan who is always his ape to accomplish his purposes of divine vengeance upon the inhabitants of the earth. Notice in verse one he

⁵ Isaiah 14:12-15.

⁶ Revelation 12:10.

⁷ Revelation 12:7-9.

⁸ Revelation 12:12.

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gives him the key of the bottomless pit, *abussos* (ab'-us-sos), the pit of the abyss in the Greek. This is a place that is described seven times in the book of Revelation. It is used to describe a mysterious subterranean cavern on earth that extends into the bowels of the earth via some kind of shaft that God has sealed shut in order to incarcerate and to torment exceptionally evil demons.

You will recall in Luke eight when Jesus confronted the legion of demons that possessed the man. The text there reads, "They were imploring him not to command them to go away into the abyss."⁹ And so you will recall that Satan sent them into the swine. So this is a place where other demons do not want to be. In fact, Jude describes this place and its inhabitants in verse six as a place for, quote, "angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."¹⁰

According to 1 Peter chapter three and verse 20 these were demons, quote, "Who once were disobedient...in the days of Noah,"¹¹ when Satan and his minions, you will recall, conspired against the human race to corrupt it. I might remind you of that in Genesis six in the days of Noah we read of the Nephalim, a term that translates a Hebrew term meaning "the fallen ones," "those who with great power are able to crush others;" those demons entered into human men, possessing them, and then we read that they cohabited with females, the daughters of men according to Genesis 6:2 and we also know that the children of these unions were fully human, though profoundly influenced by demons, and 120 years later God destroyed the whole world with the flood.

Now, perhaps they were trying to produce some kind of mongrel progeny that would not be totally human, that would be so demonically possessed that it would permanently destroy the human line, "the seed of the woman" as it was described in Genesis 3:15, from which Christ would eventually come, a mongrel race that would somehow mar the image of God in man and attempt to so corrupt the human strain as to prevent the possibility even of the incarnation of Christ and, thus, thwart the possibility of a man dying for men; a plot that was so diabolical as to potentially prevent the atonement, to make men unredeemable.

We are not sure all that they were up to, but what we are sure of is that it incensed the Lord God and he incarcerated them. It was a wickedness so heinous that God permanently bound these demons according to 2 Peter chapter two and verse four where we read, "God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment."¹²

Hell there, by the way, is a Greek term *tartaros* (tar-tar-o'-sas), a Greek verb derived from the word *tartaros* (tar'-tar-os) which is a term that his readers were well acquainted with. It was one taken from Greek mythology referring to this subterranean abyss

⁹ Luke 8:31.

¹⁰ Jude 6.

¹¹ 1 Peter 3:20.

¹² 2 Peter 2:4.

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considered even lower than hell where the gods supposedly put the very worst of the worst.

And Peter also spoke of this place in relation to our Lord in 1 Peter three and verse 18 at the end. We read how that our Lord was, “put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,”¹³ and then he went on to say, “in which also,” in other words while his body lay in the tomb, his spirit did something else, “In which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient.”¹⁴ A fascinating side note here. He made proclamation, *kerusso* (kay-roos’-so). He proclaimed, he announced, he heralded something. What did he say to these demons in this abyss? He proclaimed to them his victory over sin, over Satan and over death. And the audience, again, was the spirits now in prison, literally in the pit of the abyss or the bottomless pit. So this prison is the place for the most vile and loathsome of all of the demons.

So Satan, now, is given the key to unlock this underground chamber and in verse two we read that “he opened the bottomless pit; and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.”¹⁵ This is reminiscent of the judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember in Genesis 19 and verse 28 we read that, “The smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace.”¹⁶ So the blackness of this eruption is going to send a signal to the world that something even more heinous is about to happen. Can you imagine for one moment what it would be like for us to release all of the prisoners in our penitentiaries around the world? My friends, this will be exceedingly more destructive than that.

Secondly, we must understand *the nature of the plague*. In verse three we read, “Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.”¹⁷ Now locusts are associated with divine judgment in the Old Testament. For example, we see that God sent them upon the Egyptians. In Exodus chapter 10 and verse we read, “they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.”¹⁸

In fact, the prophet Joel tells us in Joel chapter two that the day of the Lord will be like a locust plague. In 1889 it was reported that a locust swarm over the Red Sea covered 2000 square miles.

John Philips tells us in his commentary on Revelation the following: “The worst locust plague in modern times struck the Middle East in 1951 to 52 when in Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia every green and growing thing was devoured across hundreds of

¹³ 1 Peter 3:18.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 3:19-20.

¹⁵ Revelation 9:2.

¹⁶ Genesis 19:28.

¹⁷ Revelation 9:3.

¹⁸ Exodus 10:15.

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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.”

But I want you to understand, my friends, that the locusts described here in the fifth trumpet are no ordinary locusts. These have, notice, “the power of scorpions.” The power of a scorpion is really two fold. One, they can inflict enormous pain even death due to their venomous stinging tail. And, secondly, they can terrorize man. Obviously these are not ordinary locusts because they do not have such powers, nor do ordinary locusts dwell in the bowels of the earth in a maximum security prison for the worst of demons. Nor do they look like or even act like what we are about to discover. And certainly normal locusts do not have a king as we read in verse 11. These, I believe, are demons who will swarm the earth like locusts, locusts who have been known to swarm thousands of square miles as we have just read.

As I thought about this, there is no indication here of their actual size. However, because of the detailed description that John is able to give, we can assume that they are much larger than a tiny locust, but probably somewhat smaller than a man. But that is certainly not the point. They will be terrifying beyond description. So the imagery here is that of a swarm of demons who take on the characteristics of this scorpion like creature.

Now notice the parameters and target of their mission in verse four. They were told not to “hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”¹⁹ Now, the ones who have the seal of God we know are the 144,000 Jewish evangelists that we have studied in the past as well as, frankly, all of the redeemed that will be living during that time. All of which the forces of hell are able to identify because of the seal that God places on the heads of the redeemed as we read in Revelation 3:12 and 2 Timothy 2:19. In fact, in Revelation 22 verse four we read, quote, “For his name is on our foreheads.”²⁰

Similarly in Ezekiel chapter nine we read where God dispatched an angel to place a mark on the foreheads of the remnant of the righteous Jews in Jerusalem to protect them from the Babylonians that were about to invade. And those who did not have such a mark perished.

I find it interesting that during the tribulation the satanically possessed antichrist will target only those who belong to Christ. But the Lord will have these demons target only those who belong to Satan.

As a footnote, as I was meditating on these truths I found myself kind of smiling thinking here we have demons really fighting against one another, fighting against their own kind, shall we say. And this just demonstrates the utter insanity and confusion of sin and... and the wickedness that it generates. And I might add something very practical here. My friends, don't waste your time trying to figure out why people do the sinful things they

¹⁹ Revelation 9:4.

²⁰ See Revelation 22:4.

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do, because sin is insanity. It is irrational. All you are going to do is spend your time exhuming the cadaver of the old man. You need to spend your time instructing the new man. So put away your shovels and pull out your sword. Sin is insanity.

So irrationally, these demons do not forge an alliance with the wicked, but they target them in obedience to God. But notice in verse five, “They were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.”²¹ The word “torment” in the original language refers to excruciating, acute pain that is both physical as well as mental. This is the kind of pain that they will be able to produce. And in verse six we read that in those days men will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die and death flees from them.

Astounding, isn't it, to think that this loathsome judgment will last for five months which, interestingly, is the life span of a normal locust. They typically live from May to September. And the excruciating pain of their stings will be a torture that is so egregious that men will long to die. They will seek death. Isn't it interesting? They will seek death, not repentance. They will seek death. But the text says it will flee from them. In the Greek it literally refers to something that will aggressively run away from those who are pursuing it.

Think about it. No method of suicide will be successful. There will be no escape from judgment. My friend, the horror of this judgment is another testimony to the holiness of God and his utter hatred of sin. And yet think about it. Even during this time we know that the gospel of grace will continue to go forth and summon sinners to repentance and faith in the coming king. You will remember, again, that there will be during this time 144,000 Jewish evangelists along with many new believers. This combined with the two witnesses that we will learn about in Revelation 11 and these will all together be boldly proclaiming the message of judgment as well as saving grace, the testimony of God's mercy extended to sinners. And yet what is unbelievable is that later on in verses 20 through 21 here in this text we read that men will still not repent of their idolatry and of their wickedness. What a testimony to the depravity of man.

By now the world has experienced plague after plague from the seal judgments and now here we are at the fifth trumpet judgment. Millions of people are dead by this time around the world because of what has happened in the stench of dead animals in the sea and on land, not to mention human corpses mingled with the smoke of all of the fires and the volcanoes. All of this combined will be unbearable. And now to endure a swarm of demons that envelops the earth inflicting this kind of pain from which there is no escape is inconceivable.

Thirdly, *the characteristics of the locusts*. The Spirit of God goes to great lengths to describe this through his servant John, and again, you must understand that John here is trying to describe the indescribable. Notice verse seven. “The appearance of the locusts

²¹ Revelation 9:5.

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was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.”²²

John here begins to with the head and works his way back to the tail, and he uses the analogy here of a horse. It might be helpful for you to know that during those ancient days the horse was the most feared form of military equipment. Roman horses had various kinds of armor including, as we have discovered, a bronze breast plate with the relief of a lion on it, and sometimes they had other figures as well of famous people, and their harnesses and their tack were decorated with large silver and bronze attachments to show off rank and to be intimidating. And some of the horses even had armor that included an armor head piece that wrapped around their eyes and their head to protect them and around their forehead. So the imagery here that is... that John is using is one of an intimidating power that is coming forward here, of invincibility.

Notice also, “On their heads appeared to be crowns like gold.”²³ I’m not sure what he means here. The language helps us a bit. Crowns in Greek is *stephanoi* (stef-an’-oy) which refers to the victor’s crown. Perhaps this is emblematic of their invincibility. But certainly it speaks of the menacing, daunting head of superiority of this creature, something that is superior to human beings.

And then we read, “Their faces were like the faces of men.”²⁴ Notice the word “like.” Not quite, but similar to, or resembling. This adds to the sheer panic that these creatures will evoke. Think about it. Any time there is anything that is created—for example, in the movies—that looks like a human being, but it is not quite a human being. Any time you see anything like that you can tell it is not human and it has a terrifying look to it. In fact, I can remember with our children the first time we took them to the circus. They saw a clown. Well, the clown looked kind of human, but it wasn’t a human and so they screamed in horror. They have no category in which to put that. That is the idea here.

Their faces look like the faces of men. And this also suggests that these super human evil creatures are intelligent beings capable of facial expression which only adds to the menacing horror of that look that they have. And then we read that, “They had hair like the hair of women,”²⁵ which would be in that day long and flowing hair, but no doubt, this will be a look that is not one of beauty and of grace, but wild and unkept and filthy, adding to the... the ghastliness of these creatures. And I believe this is even reminiscent of the Lord’s description of the Persian horde in Jeremiah 51:27, that horde that he would bring in upon the Babylonians. And there we read that he will, “Bring up the horses like bristly locusts.”²⁶ So these creatures have some kind of long hair on them. And the text goes on to read that “their teeth were like the teeth of lions.”²⁷ Obviously, a description that can only be made when a creature opens its mouth and snarls or growls in such a way

²² Revelation 9:7.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Revelation 9:8.

²⁶ Jeremiah 51:27.

²⁷ Revelation 9:8.

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as to reveal its teeth. Lion like teeth would underscore, again, the invincible, ferocious nature of these demonic beasts.

Verse nine he tells us, “They had breastplates like breastplates of iron.”²⁸ Again, this is reminiscent of the indomitable power portrayed by the Roman legions with their armor and even the Roman war horse. The idea here is that no weapon of man will be able to defeat this demonic horde. “The sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.”²⁹ You see, what John witnesses here is the deafening sound of war. And the only thing that he could relate this to would be the sound of approaching chariots that could be heard from long distances we are told.

History records that that sound of approaching chariots was so intimidating, so loud that it would cause men to melt in fear knowing that death was imminent. Joel chapter two verse five the prophet spoke of the noise of chariots. So just the sound of this demonic swarm will strike fear in the hearts of men.

And then in verse 10 he tells us, “They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.”³⁰ Here is a description of their most formidable weapon, their stinger. Of the 1500 species of scorpions that exist in the world today only about 50 species produce enough venom to cause serious effects in humans. But out of those 50, 25 of these species pose a serious lethal risk to human beings accounting for thousands of deaths a year world wide. In fact, 10 times as many as snake bites, and they live mainly in North Africa and in the Middle East and South America and Mexico, and they produce systemic effects in human beings such as vomiting, cramps, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, hypersalivation, difficulty swallowing, agitation and anaphylactic shock.

And here, dear friends, the Lord tells us that the sting of these demonic creatures will, according to verse five, “be like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.” So somehow the sting of these locust like demons will produce the same type of systemic types that I just mentioned which would certainly fall within the category of what John describes here as torment. Men will want to die, but death will flee from them.

And then, finally, notice the Lord reveals to John a most fascinating piece of information and that is the nature of their king in verse 11.

“They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.”³¹ Now, John supplies this information about this demonic commander bilingually as he typically did in his gospel as well as here in Revelation. And in both the Hebrew and the Greek, the Hebrew being Abaddon and the Greek Apollyon, both languages interpret this term as destroyer or exterminator. So we have this commander king that is a destroyer. Now, I do not believe that this is a

²⁸ Revelation 9:9.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Revelation 9:10.

³¹ Revelation 9:11.

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reference to Satan. Nowhere in Scripture we find Satan identified with the abyss in which he will later be in prison during the millennium as we read in Revelation chapter 20, the first three verses. You see, Satan has not been—and certainly he is not today—incarcerated in the abyss. Satan has been free to pursue his diabolical purposes prior to the opening of this abyss that apparently releases this king and the text says this angel of the abyss.

Moreover, according to Ephesians chapter six and verse 12 we read that Satan rules over a supernatural empire of demons that are ranked according to four unique divisions: rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, heavenly places being a reference to the entire realm of spiritual beings over which Satan commands. So I believe the evidence here would favor that this king that is over them, this angel of the abyss is just another high ranking demon in the satanic empire, one that obviously served as a commander with those original demons that Jude described as those, quote, “angels who did not kept their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”³²

Now I would hasten to add that, indeed, they along with Satan will soon be eternally consigned to, quote, the lake of fire that Jesus said has been prepared for them in Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 20 and verse 10 which, I might also add, will be the eternal abode for the ungodly. In Revelation 20 and verse 15 we read this is the second death, the lake of fire. “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”³³

Dear friend, I would plead with you by the grace of God to confess Jesus as your Savior and as your Lord before it is too late. The sun is about to set upon this day of grace in which we now live. The darkness of judgment is almost here. And I would ask you: How long will you reject his mercy and his grace? How long?

And, finally, the fifth trumpet judgment being over we read in verse 12, “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.”³⁴ Remember the fifth judgment was the first of three woes that we read about in chapter eight verse 13. The three woes that warned, that were basically a warning that was given by an angel flying in mid heaven. So the Lord pauses here yet again after this plague and says, “The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.”³⁵ Again, an opportunity for men to repent. Some will, most won’t. Two more trumpets will sound. The sixth trumpet, as we will learn, will release four demons from the region of the great river Euphrates. And they will kill a third of mankind that is left upon the earth. That region where we now have our troops where we continue to experience such turmoil and war, that region that historically has been the greatest haters of Israel and those who love Christ. And in the seventh trumpet that will be described in detail in chapter 15 we will

³² Jude 6.

³³ Revelation 20:15.

³⁴ Revelation 9:12.

³⁵ Ibid.

The Fifth Trumpet

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unleash the seven bowl judgments. Three woes. The first one is past. Two more are coming.

Dear friend, I close with this thought. Jesus said when he was about to go back into heaven that he would send the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. And he does this through his Word. And you have heard his word today. And I just pray that you will humble yourself before his Word, before these staggering truths play themselves out as they will. I just pray that you will avail yourselves of God's saving grace before it is too late that you might escape the judgment to come.

Let's pray together.

Father, again, we are humbled by your grace when we recognize afresh the judgments that you will one day pour out upon those who reject you. And, Lord, we confess that were it not for your love for us, for your mercy and grace in our lives we would be among that group. But, Lord, our hearts plead for those that we love, family members and friends and others who we don't even know. We plead for them, Lord, that they would hear the gospel of grace and that they would repent and believe. Lord, thank you for these truths. Cause them to motivate us to have an ardent zeal for evangelism and may we live lives of holiness and purity that bring glory to you, knowing that some day soon we will see our glorious Savior and King face to face. For it is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

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