

# A SERIES THROUGH THE REVELATION

## Revelation 9—The Fifth and Sixth Trumpet | 6.2.22

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### I. INTRODUCTION (Revelation 9)

- A. Tonight, we will look at another storyline chapter, a continuation of **Revelation 8** where we see God moving closer to completion what He began with the sounding of the first four of seven trumpets. This evening we are going to be looking at the sounding of the fifth and six trumpets, and what they entail.
- B. What unfolds tonight through the fifth and six trumpet will challenge us, as well as disturb us. The God of glory, who sits high above the circle of the earth (**Isa. 40:22**) is laying claim not only to the people, but the physical land in which the nations dwell in. Through these “seemingly” serve judgments, God is yet again, in mercy calling for the nations to repent.

### II. DEMONIC LOCUST ASCENDING FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (Revelation 9:1-6)

- A. **Revelation 9:1-3**      “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. 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. Then the smoke of the locust came upon the earth. And to them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power.”
  - 1. Right out of the gate, the fifth angel sounds his trumpet and John sees a star fallen (*fell/falling*) from heaven. Some have made this star to be a fallen angel, or satan himself, but this is unlikely for a couple reasons;
    - a. It wouldn’t make sense that God would entrust the key to the bottomless pit, to satan himself, or a fallen angel.
    - b. This would be the only time in the Revelation where an evil angel is entrusted with an assignment from God (*seems unlikely*).
  - 2. It’s best to see this as an intelligent angel, who’s been sent by God from above, for a specific task, “...To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.” This angel is also setting the stage of both what the army hordes will impact, and the characteristics of them, both of which are terrifying.
    - a. The Bottomless Pit—Once again, the key to this pit was *GIVEN* to him. It’s clear, God is governing all that’s happening. It’s being mentioned to give the Church confidence, to help us be unafraid, it’s to help us trust that the **Revelation 4** God who’s seated on His throne, that the God who walks among the 7 golden lampstands, that the God’s who nail pierced hands, and slit throat is the One leading all things...not just well, but perfectly.
      - 1. “We are never to underestimate the power of evil— “on earth is not his equal, says Martin Luther— but neither are we to overrate the power of evil.” –Darrell W Johnson, Discipleship On The Edge, Pg. 197
      - 2. The bottomless pit is used to speak of an abyss, or a temporary holding place for demons, the antichrist, and the false prophet. This same pit will also be used to hold the devil for 1,000 years during the millennial reign of Christ (**Revelation 20:1-3**). This is hell, not the lake of fire, it’s the temporary holding place for satan and his demons (**Luke 8:31; Romans 10:7; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 11:7; 17:8**).
    - b. He Opened The Bottomless Pit, And Smoke Arose Like The Smoke Of A Great Furnace. So The Sun Was Darkened...Because Of The Smoke Of The Pit—This smoke that ascending from the pit is a sign of the judgment that’s coming. It’s the fires of hell, coming out in real time to touch the earth in real, visible ways (**Genesis 19:28**).

1. This plague is likened to what the prophet Joel spoke of in **Joel 1:2-2:11**. What Joel spoke of was just a harbinger, a forecast of something that was even greater still yet coming. The terrible locust invasion of Joel's day has now given way to something more formidable.
2. The Church is experiencing a preview of what's to come (*glory, power, life in the Holy Spirit, joy*), but so also are those who dwell on the earth (*hell, eternal torment, torture*).
3. Out Of The Smoke Locust Came Upon The Earth. And To Them Was Given Power As The Scorpions—Once again, *to them was GIVEN power*. Terrifying as they are, these locusts have to operate within the confines of God, and what God allows. These are supernatural beast-like creatures that don't fit the normal category of locust;
  - i. *Locust don't breed in the middle of the earth.*
  - ii. *Locust don't have a demonized leader fueling them (Prov. 30:27).*
  - iii. *Locust typically feed on vegetation, but not these ones.*

**B. Revelation 9:4-6**      *"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. 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. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them."*

1. In a strange reversal, these locusts aren't allowed to do what they naturally do, which is strip everything green in sight. Instead of devouring vegetation, God permits them to strike, *"...only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads..."*
2. Just like Israel of old was protected from the judgments that came upon Pharaoh, so also will the people of God be protected (**Ex. 8:22; 9:4; 10:23**).
3. Instead of stripping the vegetation, God permits these demonized locusts to torment humanity. This word torment speaks of the worst kind of ongoing torment, a torment that doesn't stop and afflicts the whole of the human experience (**Matthew 8:6, 29; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:8; Revelation 12:2**). The idea of their torment is likened to the eternal torment that awaits those who never repent (**Revelation 14:10-11; 20:10**).
  - a. They Were Not Given Authority To Kill Them, But To Torment Them For Five Months—Again, God is the unnamed agent doling out authority, telling them what they can, and cannot do. Five months speaks either of the lifespan of the locust, or the dry season in that area, between April-August (*locust season*).
    1. Typically, locust invasions will only last about 3 days in one place, so this seems to be speaking to a prolonged season of torment, under God's leadership.
  - b. In Those Days Men Will Seek Death And Will Not Find It...Death Will Flee From Them—God's aim right now through this plague is not death, it's repentance, therefore He's not letting them kill themselves. Death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person, it's what happens after death that's the worst thing.
    1. This is an ironic moment happening here. In **Revelation 6:9-11**, they have killed the martyrs of Jesus, but here, God won't let them die. Beloved, vengeance belongs to God. This is the idea of divine retribution. They have tortured and killed, so God is returning the like back to them. Plague

**III. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DEMONIC LOCUST (Revelation 9:7-11)**

- A. Revelation 9:7-11**      “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. They had hair like women’s hair, their teeth were like lion’s teeth. 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. They had tails like scorpions, and their stings were in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months. They had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew was Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.”
1. It’s important that we don’t push this imagery too far. People have worked hard to make these this or that, and I think often times derailing God’s intention of their description. We need to note how many times John uses the word “like.”
  2. It seems best to see these as a supernatural cross between a scorpion, a locust and a battle-hardened warrior. We can also find this much of this same imagery in **Joel 1:6-7; 2:4-5**. It’s clear, they inflict pain with their tails, and they strike fear with their appearance (*they are going to attack the very ones who are serving them*).
  3. Well John’s description of them starts with their shape, then covers their head, their face, their hair, their teeth, their breastplates, their wings and their tails (*literally from top to bottom*).
    - a. The Shape... Was Like Horses Prepared For Battle—Job spoke of battle horses who’s battle who’s leap is like a locust (**Job 39:19-25**). Beloved, they are prepared, ready to fight.
    - b. On Their Heads Were Crowns... Like Gold And Their Faces Were Like The Faces Of Men—These creatures have delegated authority, and they will be victorious. But this isn’t true gold, it’s a counterfeit gold. These creatures are claiming authority they don’t possess (**Revelation 1-2**). Their faces speak of their human-like intelligence, making them more than just insects.
    - c. They Had Hair Like Women’s Hair—This is a continuation of the human-like features they possess.
    - d. Their Teeth Were Like Lion’s Teeth—We know that the devil parades himself like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8**).
    - e. They Had Breastplates Like... Iron—This is strengthening the idea that they are nearly undefeatable. They are protected like the Roman warhorses, covered in the front and in the back.
    - f. The Sound Of Their Wings Was Like... Chariots—When locust are amassed, it’s a deafening noise, and in a moment we will see how many of them there are (**Joel 2:5**). They aren’t cowardly, they are RUNNING INTO BATTLE, further adding terror to their sight.
    - g. They Had Tails Like Scorpions And Their Stings Were In Their Tails—In verse 5 we come to think that these stings are figurative, but here we learn, they are real. Whatever fear was struck by their sight, it’s nothing compared to what they actually do.
    - h. Their Power Was To Hurt Men Five Months—This timeframe is given to us for two primary reasons. 1, it shows us that this is always what satan has wanted to do; to hurt men, even if they are earth dwellers. 2, From God’s perspective, this is a short-time in light of eternity. This is an opportunity for the nations to see how terrible of taskmaster satan is (**Matthew 18; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5**).
    - i. They Had As King Over Them The Angel Of The Bottomless Pit, Whose Name In Hebrew Was Abaddon, But In Greek He Has The Name Apollyon—Well, it’s clear, there’s two separate angels here. One godly one that was dispatched to unlock the pit, and another evil that ascends out of the pit.

1. I don't think this is satan, largely because he has been thrown out of the 2<sup>nd</sup> heaven yet (**Revelation 12**) or the pit (**Revelation 20:1-3**). The word Abaddon means destroy, or destroyer, or the destroyer. The idea is that the hordes of hell are unified in their mission to afflict even their own followers.

#### **IV. THE SOUNDING OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET (Revelation 9:12-21)**

##### **A. Revelation 9:12** *“One woe is past (the fifth trumpet). Behold, still two more woes are coming.”*

1. What was started in the first woe, and its desire to kill, but only able to hurt, will now give way to the ability for death. 5 months of torment and pain will now open the door for death. This is why more woes are coming.

##### **B. Revelation 9:13-15** *“Then the sixth angel sounded; and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.”*

1. Well, we aren't told whose voice this is, but it's not God's, because it comes from the area which is near the presence of God. Whoever it is, it's clear, God is speaking through them.
2. It's here, that the four angels of destruction mentioned in **Revelation 7:1-3**, who were chomping at the bit to be released, have now been released. I believe that these are evil angels because the bible says, *“...release the four angels who are bound...”* (**Mark 3:27; Revelation 20:2**).
3. The prayer of vindication from the martyrs in **Revelation 6:9-11** is being answered, the time is now, in the time of God's judgments, a very specific time, *“...the hour, and day, and month and year...”*
  - a. *(They) Were Released To Kill A Third Of Mankind*—The total number of people alive today are 7.9billion. 1/3 of 7.9 billion is, 2,633,333,333. And if 2.6 billion people die over 1,260 days that equals 2,063,492 people dying per day, for 1,260 days.
  - b. But, if 1.9 million people have already died from the ¼ judgement (**Rev. 6:7-8**), this number changes on the 1/3 judgment. That leaves 6 billion people alive. So, 1/3 of 6 billion is, 2,000,000,000. And if 2 billion people died for 1,260 days, that would be 1,587,301 dying per day, for 1,260 days.
  - c. In 3.5 years, the earth's population would drop from 7.9 billion to 6 billion after the ¼ judgment in **Revelation 6:7-8**, and then another 2 billion by the 1/3 judgment in **Revelation 9:16,18**. This would leave the earth's population after 1,260 days, 4 billion, thus we'd have around 4 billion deaths. Beloved, what do you do with these numbers?

##### **C. Revelation 9:16** *“Now the number of the army of horseman was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.”*

1. Upon release, we now hear the number of this demonic horde, 200,000,000. This number is twice the number John of angels in **Revelation 5:11** (*although there were thousands of thousands*). We should take this number as a literal number, largely because John said, *“...I heard the number of them.”*
2. The strongest army during the time of this Revelation (90-95 A.D) was around 125,000 soldiers and then another 125,000 auxiliary soldiers. The army that John sees is 1,000 x's that. Beloved, this number wasn't lost on John's readers, and it shouldn't be lost on us either.

- a. Currently, the US is said to have around 1,388,100 soldiers, and then another 844,950 reserves. In total that's 2,233,050. This is the most formidable force the earth has ever seen, and it's under the leadership of God, doing something that NATO, the UN, and the joint work of the nations couldn't stop if they wanted to.

**D. Revelation 9:17-19**      *“And thus I saw the horses in the vision; those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.”*

1. John is making clear to his readers, previously he heard the number, and now he's seen the horses (*there real*).
  - a. Breastplates Of Fiery Red, Hyacinth Blue, and Sulfur Yellow—What they are wearing is red, dusky blue like smoke, and yellow like sulfur. The riders are emblematic of where they've come from (*hell*).
  - b. By These Three Plagues A Third Of Mankind Was Killed—The three plagues are the fire, smoke and brimstone (sulfur) and that's coming out of their mouths.
  - c. Their Power Is In Their Mouth, And In Their Tails, For Their Tales Are Like Serpents—Out of their mouths came fire, sulfur and smoke, killing 1/3 of mankind. It's safe to say, John said, “...their tails were LIKE serpents”, meaning they strike with them, inflicting pain, but also killing.
    1. Remember, just like the angels aren't earthly, neither are these creatures. They've ascended out of the bottomless pit, from hell itself.

## **V. THE MERCY OF GOD WRAPPED UP IN HIS JUDGMENTS (Revelation 9:20-21)**

**A. Revelation 9:20-21**      *“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. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”*

1. Well, among the earth dwellers, the one's God's targeting in these judgments there are some who have survived and made it through. The deaths have come by way of the 200,000,000 demonic horsemen, but even with this great catastrophe on the earth, people still don't turn their hearts to God, but instead, to idols, and worthless things.
2. The idea isn't that they didn't want to repent, but that they refused, they were and are opposed to repenting. Beloved, God is trying to rouse the earth from its delusion, He's trying to sober them up from their intoxication, He's afflicting them in this age, so that they might be with Him in eternity.
3. Beloved, the nations aren't inherently good, they are inherently evil. We can see clearly here, the total depravity in the human heart. Apart from Christ, there's nothing good (**Romans 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-10**).
4. What is it that they won't repent of? Murders, sexual immorality, sorcery, and thefts. People have hardened their hearts towards God, and even in the loss of 4 billion people, in 1,260 days, they are still unwilling to come to Him in repentance.