

1. **Introduction:** Today we continue from where we ended last lesson. We have finished the first 4 trumpet judgments and are ready for the “3 woes” of the final 3 trumpets.

2. **Revelation 9:1-2:** *And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. ² He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft.*

- Falling stars sometime represent demons or Satan (e.g., Jude 13; Luke 10:18; Rev 12:9). In this case, the star descending to earth is an angelic messenger sent from God as an agent of judgment.
- God, who is in sovereign control of everything in the universe, gives this angel-star the key to the cover that seals the shaft of the Abyss (a term used 7 times in Revelation to refer to the abode/prison for the demon locusts (9:1-2; 2 Pet 2:4); Apollyon, king of the locusts (9:11); the beast (11:7; 17:18); and Satan (20:1, 3).
- The cover was opened and sun and air were darkened by smoke from the shaft as from a furnace.

3. **Revelation 9:3-5:** *Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. ⁴ They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵ They were allowed to torment them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them.*

- This judgment resembles both the 8th plague against Egypt and the locust invasion of Joel 1-2. In this case, the hoard of scorpion-locusts is specifically intent on torturing anyone not protected by the seal of God (7:1-8).
- This judgment was against unsealed people only. The scorpion-locusts were permitted to torment unsealed people for 5 months but not to kill them.
- Intensity of pain and suffering was like that of a scorpion sting. The agony was so bad that those stung sought ways to die but death was not possible for them.

4. **Revelation 9:7-11:** *In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle: on their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, ⁸ their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; ⁹ they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They have tails and stings like scorpions, and their power to hurt people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹ They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.*

- The gruesome appearance of these attackers from the Abyss together with their origin in the Abyss and the demonic character of their leader (Apollyon or destroyer), point to the scorpion-locusts' demonic origin.
- The imagery of the locusts here is so fantastical, it likely is meant to convey the spiritual reality of the judgment the locust is intended to represent: total, unstoppable devastation.
- Believers' souls are secure "in Christ," sealed against all judgments that target sin.
- As this judgment ends, **Revelation 9:12**: *The first woe has passed; behold, two woes are still to come.*

5. **Revelation 9:13-16**: *Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind.¹⁶ The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number.* The sixth angel sounded his trumpet sending the next woe to earth. The golden altar is in Heaven. It is the true altar, of which the Mosaic altar and the altar in the temple of Solomon were types and shadows. The altar in heaven is the one mentioned in Revelation 8 where martyrs wait.

- The second woe (again aimed directly at people) responds to cries of the people of God for justice.
- The voice from the altar gives a command to release four angels who are bound in chains at the river Euphrates. Jesus said, hell was made for the devil and the fallen angels. Since the four angels at the river have been in chains, they cannot be good angels. They must be fallen angels.
- The fallen angels have been chained at the river waiting for this precise moment in history. The river Euphrates is a symbol which the Jews of Israel would have recognized as the northern boundary between the promised land and the land of the Gentiles.
- The river provided a traditional invasion route for rivals like the Assyrians and Babylonians. Jeremiah likened that invasion route to a pot, boiling with water, that when poured out crosses the Euphrates. The invaders sense they are crossing a boundary but simply pour over it into Israel as they invade.
- The invasion released by the sixth angel is to be unique. A terrifying army will invade not just to harm Israel but all the world. Consider verses 15-19.
- The four angels have been kept bound to be ready for the precise time (year, month, day, and hour) when they will be released. The release time is the perfect time to accomplish God's plan. When released, they are to kill a third of unredeemed humanity.
- The four fallen angels command a terrifying army consisting of two hundred million mounted warriors.

6. **Revelation 9:17-19**: *"And this is how I saw the horses in my vision and those who rode them: they wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur, and the heads*

of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. ¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁹ For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents with heads, and by means of them they wound."

7. **What Does this Mysterious Army Signify:** Unlike the previous black cloud of demons that also came up out of the shaft of the abyss, which was restricted to tormenting people, this army of 200 million has the power and permission to kill. They slaughter a third of humanity.
- The army could be humans under satanic, demonic control. It could alternatively be all existing demons unleashed to kill a third of mankind. It seems most likely to be a demonic army that can kill in ways that stun the imagination.
 - Like the descriptions of the demon locust-scorpions, these descriptions stretch language to a breaking point. The horses' heads are like lions. Their "*tails are like serpents with heads.*" The colors described - "*the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur*" sound like the suffering of hell itself.
 - Is this slaughter of a third of humanity random or targeted on the unredeemed or? Whichever way the slaughter is carried out, the demon army has God's permission to carry out their mission.
 - The tragic outcome of this disaster is much suffering and death but not accompanied by repentance.
8. **Revelation 9:20-21:** *The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*
- The reference to "*these plagues,*" appears to refer to the cumulative effect of all the "plagues" imposed by these judgments.
 - The "*rest of mankind*" are the remaining unredeemed who did not die in the plagues.
 - God's judgments are intended to convince the unredeemed to repent and flee to Christ, to flee from the wrath to come into the arms of the Sovereign One, but many did not repent!
 - Survivors of the judgment tragedies did not give up their evil habits, did not seek the only One who can save them. They continued in ways and deeds that pleased their sin nature.
 - During Jesus' earthly mission, He healed all kinds of ailments and diseases, raised the dead, healed lepers, and fed multitudes all with grace and kindness. Most refused to repent.
 - Now, at the end of the opportunity, when their sinful behavior is judged and tragedies result, people still refuse to repent. Truly, this is difficult to understand but Paul's comments help.
9. **Romans 9:15-18:** *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all*

the earth.”¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

- As we begin chapter 10, the scene changes. Again, the veil between the physical and spiritual worlds is pulled back and we see amazing things.
- As we have seen before, the most significant invisible reality presented is the glory of the triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father seated on a throne of eternal glory. The Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been identified as a lion and a lamb.
- The Holy Spirit is pictured as a seven-fold light blazing and shining, like a lampstand glowing with the fire of holiness. The spiritual realm is pictured as a hive of activity. Good as well as bad angels are seen.

10. **Interlude:** In chapter 7, there was an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal judgments featuring two visions (the 144,000 in 7:1-8 and the great multitude in 7:8-17). Between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments, there is a similar interlude including two visions (a mighty angel holding a little scroll in 10:1-11 and two witnesses in 11:1-13).

11. **Next:** Revelation 10.