

"THE BOOK OF REVELATION"

Chapter Nine

Following the ominous warning of the angel (eagle) in the previous chapter, the fifth angel sounds his trumpet. John sees a star fallen from heaven, to whom is given the key to the bottomless pit. As the pit is opened, smoke rises that darkens the sun and air. Then **locusts with power like scorpions** came out of the smoke, to whom was given power to harm only those who did not have the seal of God on their forehead. Their power was limited only to torment, not kill, and only for five months. Even so, men wished they could die. John describes the appearance of the locusts, and identifies their king as the angel of the bottomless pit whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon, both meaning "destruction". Thus ends the first "woe", with two more to come (1-12).

When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, John hears a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God. It tells the sixth angel to release four angels who have been bound at the river Euphrates. These angels had been prepared for the hour, day, month and year, to kill a third of mankind. At this point John hears the number of an **army of two hundred million horsemen**. Describing the colorful breastplates of those on the horses, he also relates how the lion-like heads of the horses blew fire, smoke and brimstone which killed a third of mankind. They also did much harm with serpent-like tails. Despite these two "woes", the rest of mankind did not repent of their idolatry, murders, sorceries, sexual immoralities and thefts (13-21).

As one can imagine, attempts to interpret these visions have been many and some quite fanciful. Together with the first four trumpets, I suggest the fifth and sixth trumpets signify **tools at God's disposal to bring wrath** upon the persecutors of His people. Though allowed to go only so far, Satan's influence can have the effect of weakening a nation from within. There is also the threat of external invasion by enemy forces. Therefore I concur with others that the vision of locusts from the bottomless pit symbolizes the **hellish rotteness and internal decadence** that would weaken the enemies of God's people from within. The two hundred million horsemen symbolize **external invasion** as another instrument God would use. Together with natural calamities, (depicted in the first four trumpets), these combined to bring down apostate Israel (cf. [Mt 12:43-45](#); [Lk 21:20-24](#)).

As Christians in John's day were oppressed by what seemed to be invincible opponents, visions like these would remind them that those "*who do not have the seal of God on their forehead*" ([Re 9:4](#); [7:3](#)) would

be susceptible to God's wrath.

POINTS TO PONDER

- * The sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets
- * The significance of the visions when the two trumpets sounded

OUTLINE

I. THE FIFTH TRUMPET: LOCUSTS FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (1-12)

A. THE "STAR" FALLEN FROM HEAVEN (1-2)

1. With the sounding of the fifth trumpet...
 - a. John saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth
 - b. To whom was given the key to the bottomless pit
2. When the bottomless pit was opened...
 - a. Smoke like that of a great furnace arose out of the pit
 - b. The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke

B. THE "LOCUSTS" AND THEIR POWER (3-10)

1. Out of the smoke locusts with great power came upon the earth
 - a. Power like scorpions
 - b. Commanded not to harm the grass, any green thing, or any tree
2. The extent and nature of their power
 - a. Could harm only those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads
 - b. Could not kill, but only torment them for five months
 - c. Men will seek death, but death will flee from them
3. The locusts described
 - a. Their shape like horses prepared for battle
 - b. On their heads were crowns of something like gold
 - c. Their faces were like those of men
 - d. Their hair was like women's hair
 - e. Their teeth was like lions' teeth
 - f. With breastplates like those of iron
 - g. The sound of their wings like chariots with many running horses
 - h. With tails like scorpions, and stings in their tails (though limited in power)

C. THE "KING" OVER THEM (11-12)

1. The angel of the bottomless pit
2. Whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon
 - The first of three woes is past; two more to come

II. THE SIXTH TRUMPET: THE TWO HUNDRED MILLION ARMY (13-21)

A. THE FOUR ANGELS BOUND AT THE EUPHRATES (13-15)

1. With the sounding of the sixth trumpet...
 - a. John heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God
 - b. Speaking to the sixth angel who had the trumpet
 - c. Telling him to release the four angels bound at the river Euphrates
2. The four angels released...
 - a. Who had been prepared for the hour, day, month, and year
 - b. Who were to kill a third of mankind

B. THE ARMY OF TWO HUNDRED MILLION HORSEMEN (16-19)

1. John heard the number of them
2. What he saw in the vision...
 - a. Those on the horses had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, sulfur yellow
 - b. The horses had heads like those of lions
 - c. Out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone
3. The power of this great army...
 - a. A third of mankind killed by the fire, smoke, and brimstone
 - b. The power to harm is in their mouth and tails like serpents' heads

C. THE FAILURE OF THE SURVIVORS TO REPENT (20-21)

1. Those not killed did not repent of their idolatry
2. Nor did they repent of their murders, sorceries, sexual immoralities, or thefts

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1) What are the main points of this chapter?

- The fifth trumpet: locusts from the bottomless pit (1-12)
- The sixth trumpet: the two hundred million army (13-21)

2) When the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, what did John see? (1)

- A star fallen to heaven to whom was given the key to the bottomless pit

3) What came out of the pit when it was opened? (2-3)

- Smoke which darkened the sun and air; locusts with power like scorpions

4) What were the locusts allowed to harm? (4)

- Only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads

5) What other limitations was placed upon their power (5-6)

- Could not kill, but only torment for five months

6) How are the locusts described? (7-10)

- Their shape like horses prepared for battle
- On their heads were crowns of something like gold
- Their faces were like those of men
- Their hair was like women's hair
- Their teeth was like lions' teeth
- With breastplates like those of iron
- The sound of their wings like chariots with many running horses
- With tails like scorpions, and stings in their tails (though limited in power)

7) Who was their king? What was his name in Hebrew and Greek? (11)

- The angel of the bottomless pit
- In Hebrew, Abaddon; in Greek, Apollyon

8) What did John hear when the sixth trumpet sounded (13-14)

- A voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God
- Telling the sixth angel to release the four angels bound at the river Euphrates

9) What were the four angels released to do? (15)

- To kill a third of mankind

10) What did John hear next? (16)

- The number of the army of horsemen: two hundred million

11) What were the colors of the breastplates of those on the horses? (17)

- Fiery red, hyacinth blue, sulfur yellow

12) What were the heads of the horses like? What came out of their mouths? (17)

- Like the heads of lions; fire, smoke, and brimstone

13) Who was killed by the smoke, fire, and brimstone? (18)

- A third of mankind

14) Where was the power to do harm in the horses? (19)

- In their mouths and in their tails

15) Of what did those who were not killed not repent? (20-21)

- Idolatry, murders, sorceries, sexual immorality, theft

