

Message #24

Revelation 9:1-12

Many people think hell will be a party place where everyone has a good time forever. Many people think demons are nice, friendly angelic beings whose goal it is to empower people so they can experience good things in life. **The fact is, Satan and demons hate all humans who have been created in the image of God and their goal is to destroy them.** The only thing that is preventing this from happening right now is the restraining work of the Sovereign God.

Demons want to torture and kill people. Demons prompt people to commit suicide. Demons are not people's friends; they are evil, Satanic fallen angels who are out to destroy everyone and everything they can. **Always remember that no demon can act independently of the sovereignty of God. But this judgment is authorized by the sovereignty of God in the Tribulation.**

That point is clear in this section of Scripture. What we see here is this:

THE FIFTH TRUMPET JUDGMENT IS A WOE JUDGMENT IN WHICH GOD SOVEREIGNLY AUTHORIZES A DEMONIC FORCE TO SO ATTACK AND INFLECT PEOPLE THAT THEY WILL WANT TO KILL THEMSELVES.

The last three trumpet judgments are the worst. In fact, in Revelation 8:13 they are specifically identified as the final three "woe" judgments. God, Himself, makes this classification of these Tribulation judgments.

Grant Osborne observed that the two trumpet judgments of Revelation 9 "are three times as long as the first four trumpet judgments put together (8:6-12)" (*Revelation*, p. 358).

In these two trumpet judgments we learn a lot about demons. There is much to learn about them in Revelation 9. **In the fifth trumpet judgment, demons torture people and in the sixth trumpet judgment demons kill people.**

There are six observations we want to make about this fifth seal judgment:

OBSERVATION #1 – The fifth trumpet judgment is the first "woe" judgment. **8:13**

This is a bad judgment, one of the worst three of all the Tribulation judgments. By virtue of the fact that this is "woe" judgment one, and as bad as this is, it will only get worse. You do not want to be on this earth when God pours out this judgment.

Woe judgments are extremely severe judgments. They will bring horrible judgment against people on this earth. The people are the specific targets of these judgments.

OBSERVATION #2 – The fifth trumpet judgment is inaugurated by an angel. **9:1a**

This judgment is authorized by one of God's good angels. This must be humiliating to demons who are forced to realize they are actually subject to God's holy angels. Satan and his demons cannot do anything without Divine permission of God and when God permits them to do something they are subject to His Holy angels.

People should not spend their time fearing Satan and demons, but fearing God. God is the One to be feared because He is the One who controls what the angels can do, including Satan and demons.

OBSERVATION #3 – The fifth trumpet judgment features a "star" that has fallen from heaven to earth. **9:1b**

Many who twist the Bible and take this out of context say that this is a reference to Muhammad and his Islamic concepts, which fell from heaven. This is totally ludicrous but if one actually thinks this, then one must observe that this is not a nice fairy story about some religious leader; this is a Tribulation judgment of God.

We know from Revelation 1:20 that the seven stars were identified as the seven angels of the seven churches. Since the Church Age is now over, we may assume that the reference to a "star" is a reference to some heavenly angel. There are four facts we may observe about this:

Fact #1 - The star is given a key to the bottomless pit. **Rev. 9:1b**

Fact #2 - The star is given personal pronouns "him" and "he," not "it." **Rev. 9:1-2/8:10**

Fact #3 - The star acts in a personal way - "he opened" the pit. **Rev. 9:2**

Fact #4 - The star is identified with a specific name - Abaddon in Hebrew or Apollyon in Greek.

Both names mean destruction or one who destroys. Rev. 9:11

Based on these facts we conclude that this is a very high ranked fallen angel in Satan's demonic army. He is an angelic, demonic leader of Satan's forces (**9:11**).

The participle "which had fallen to the earth" is perfect tense meaning he fell at some point in the past and continues to be a fallen angel. We know from Revelation 12:4 that when Satan fell from heaven he took 1/3rd of the angels with him.

We know the angelic fall occurred before Satan tempted Eve in Genesis 3. We suspect when God said, "Let us make man in Our image according to Our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), which would be the likeness of the Trinity and not Satan, that is what prompted Satan to declare "I will make myself like the Most High" (Is. 14:14).

A very important point to see here is that God knows every fallen angel by name and He uses them for His sanctioned purposes. In all reality, Satan and his demons are nothing more than puppets in the sovereign hands of God. They can only do what He permits them to do.

OBSERVATION #4 – The fifth trumpet judgment features a demonic angel opening the bottomless pit. **Rev. 9:1-2**

The thing that begins this is that this angel is given this key to this bottomless pit. Whatever this high ranking demon is doing is what he is permitted to do. He cannot just open the pit when he wants; this is only by Divine permission and authorization.

The adjective “bottomless” (abussoç) is transliterated into English by the word “abyss.” The Greek word literally means bottomless or boundless. The noun “pit” refers to a well.

Apparently this is an actual prison place for housing several demons who are presently incarcerated there.

The Bible speaks of this place as being a place where certain demons exist, live and are confined (Luke 8:31; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Certain demons have been bound in this place since the flood. This is a place that demons hate and once they are sentenced to this “bottomless pit” they cannot get out unless God sovereignly permits it (i.e. Revelation 20:1-3).

Obviously at this point in the Great Tribulation, God is going to release the vilest demons who ever existed as part of His wrath judgment.

OBSERVATION #5 – The fifth trumpet judgment will feature a very visible cosmic sign. **9:2b-3a**

When this angel opens this pit, “smoke” like that of a great furnace literally rises and, as a result, the sun and the air are darkened. Keep in mind that things are already darkened in the cosmos so this will make it even more eerie.

This smoke moment was specifically alluded to by the Apostle Peter in his prediction that this would lead to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:19).

The phrase “smoke of a great furnace” (9:2) means that this is a hellish place of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8). This is a very literal place where beings do literally burn. The idea that Hell is some Shangri-La party existence where friends meet is nowhere to be seen in the Bible. It is a place where people burn.

Notice carefully when this judgment occurs, it does not come from above but from below. The emphasis here is not on the use of heavenly forces in the Tribulation, but on the use of hellish forces.

Also observe that when Satanic forces invade, things are darkened and light is lost. Things are not seen clearly when Satanic forces are at work.

OBSERVATION #6 – The fifth trumpet judgment features a demonic invasion of locusts.
9:3-11

Throughout the O.T., the locust is used by God in very destructive judgments. God used locusts as a plague judgment in Egypt (Ex. 10:14). Albert Barnes said that locusts present the most striking symbol of all when it comes to a devouring army. Joel predicts that God will use locusts in judgment in the time he called the Day of the LORD (Joel 1:4, 15).

According to Dr. Fritz Rienecker, locusts could travel in a column of 100 feet deep and up to 4 miles in width (*A Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 486). They move into a cultivated area and strip the land bare of all of its vegetation.

We learn from **verse 3** that these locusts had the power of scorpions. The scorpion is a lobster-type creature of about 4-5 inches long. It has a claw on the end of its tail that secretes a poison, which gives intense pain. Children can die from a scorpion sting, but most adults do not die. Those who have been stung by a scorpion experience:

- 1) The place of the sting becomes inflamed.
- 2) The skin hardens and becomes red.
- 3) Intense pain follows.
- 4) People experience chills, a burning sensation that includes sweating and shivering.
- 5) A sensation of being pricked by needles.

These demons appear as demonic scorpions and there are two facts brought out about them:

Fact #1 - These demonic locusts have specific limitations. **9:4-5**

Notice how **verse 4** begins, “they were told.” God is telling these demons what they can and cannot do. God places six limitations on them:

(Limitation #1) - They cannot hurt the grass of the earth. **9:4a**

(Limitation #2) - They cannot hurt any green vegetation of the earth. **9:4b**

(Limitation #3) - They cannot hurt any tree. **9:4c**

Now the three things named here are the things locusts typically hurt and destroy. In the Tribulation God will not let these locusts to do what they normally would do.

Now the First Trumpet Judgment (Rev. 8:7) already demolished 1/3rd of trees, vegetation and grass. This Fifth Trumpet Judgment will feature demons that do unusual and unnatural things.

(Limitation #4) - They can only hurt those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. **9:4d**

We know from **Revelation 7:3 and 14:1** that this would include the 144,000 Jews. It is also probable that it would include any believer who happens to be still alive at this point in the Tribulation.

We learn in Ephesians 1:13 and II Timothy 2:19 that every believer is sealed by God. We know in the Egyptian plagues that God would not allow those plagues to touch His people (Ex. 8:22; 9:4; 10:23).

This is very important for us to grasp here. Satan can only attack his own people in this judgment. He cannot touch the property of God. Satan and his demons are actually attacking people who are on his side.

All need to see this point and understand this point: **Satan is not a friend of sinners; he is their enemy. Satan does not want what is best for people; he is after what is the worst for people. Satan is not loving and kind; he is a hateful liar and murderer, who does not want people enjoying heaven with God; but burning in hell with him.**

(Limitation #5) - They can only torment people but cannot kill people. **9:5a**

The word “torment” has to do with actual torture. The word (basanizw) refers to very intense physical torture and torment. The word means to torment someone to such a level that they are in complete distress (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 76-77).

These demons would love nothing more at this point than to start killing people and fill up the fires of hell. But they are not permitted to do so. They are only permitted to torture people. Remember these demons have come out of the pit of burning hell and that is where they want all to go.

Fact is according to **verse 6**, people will actually want to die but they can't because of the Sovereignty of God. Think of this. These people would rather die and go to burning hell than repent and turn to Jesus Christ to go to heaven.

(Limitation #6) - They can only torment people for a restricted time. **9:5b**

Demons are only permitted to hurt people for five months or about 150 days. For five months of the Tribulation people will live in this agony and not be able to escape it. This is part of the Tribulation judgment package coming directly from God.

Fact #2 - These demonic locusts have a specific description. **9:7-11**

In **verse 7**, God gives their appearance. Notice it says they had an appearance “like.” What this means is that there was a similar resemblance. This demonic army looked similar to locusts but was not like normal locusts.

In fact, the comparative adverb “like” means they are not exactly locusts but are like them. This description is not about locusts, but a demonic army.

There are nine descriptions given about this army:

(Description #1) - They are like horses prepared for battle. **9:7a**

A battle horse charges into war and knows no fear (Job 39:19-25). This demonic force is fearless and well organized and well fitted (Prov. 21:31).

(Description #2) - They have crowns of gold on their heads. **9:7b**

The noun crown is *stephanos* and is a victory crown, not a royalty crown. This demonic army will have a pure (gold) victory in carrying out this judgment.

(Description #3) - They have faces like men. **9:7c**

This is a very unique force who can take on a form of the appearance of men.

(Description #4) - They have hair like women. **9:8a**

Most militaries feature short hair. Warriors for the most part, even in ancient times, kept their hair short. This hair will have a feminine, pretty flow to it. It will be kind of a silky hair. Albert Barnes said although they are warriors, they have somewhat of an effeminate look to them.

Satan and his demons are behind the transgender and same sex concepts. This is not from God; it comes straight out of the pit of hell.

(Description #5) - They have teeth like lions. **9:8b**

This is a very dangerous demonic force. They have a gentle appearance but they are vicious and ready to rip people to shreds, as far as God permits.

(Description #6) - They have breastplates of iron. **9:9a**

This demonic army will be well protected. Their breastplates are impenetrable and no one can stop them or destroy them.

(Description #7) - They make sounds like chariots. **9:9b**

They have specific wings that are capable of making scary noise that gives a sound that is numerous and unstoppable.

(Description #8) - They have a sting in their tail. **9:10**

They do have a poison that is able to inflict pain. The word “sting” was used of a very sharp instrument that could prod an animal. This demonic sting will be very real and sharp and piercing and will leave one stung and in severe pain for five months.

The words “hurt” and “torment” means they will be able to hurt people and treat people as wicked criminals. They will sting and punish people with their demonic power.

(Description #9) - They have a demonic leader. **9:11**

Their main leader, in Hebrew, is an angelic being named Abaddon and in Greek Apollyon. Both names mean destruction or the one who destroys.

As we saw in **verse 6**, the response of men to these demons is that they want to commit suicide. They do not want to repent, they want to commit suicide. The desire to kill oneself is not of God; it comes from demons.

Suicide is a work of Satan but God determines whether or not one succeeds.

People who dabble around with Satan and demons have no idea what they are doing. They are playing a very dangerous game.

Verse 12 ends the section by saying this is just the first woe and there are two more yet to come.