

**The Seven Trumpets, Part Three**  
**Terror from the Abyss (Revelation 9:1-12)**  
**By Pastor Jeff Alexander (9/27/2015)**

**Introduction**

1. The *purpose* of the judgments
  - a. To *warn* unbelievers that their continued rebellion against heaven must end
  - b. To *call* unbelievers to repentance for their rebellion against heaven
  - c. To *demonstrate* the stubborn nature of rebels who refuse to repent
2. The *nature* of the trumpets
  - a. To *warn* of judgments unleashed by Jesus' sovereignty over human history
  - b. To announce God's holy war—that the kingdoms of this world have not submitted to the kingdom of our God
3. The first four judgments were universal calamities of either human or natural origin—wars and rumors of wars, pestilences, famines, and earthquakes, etc. They are general judgments from God because humans have rejected God and followed idols (demons; Deut. 32: 16–18, 22–25).
4. The fifth trumpet marks a major shift in emphasis.
  - a. It is the first of the three “woes” announced by the eagle flying in the midst of heaven (8:13).
    - 1) This is also a new vision (“*I looked, and I heard*”).
    - 2) Eagles portend coming destruction (Jer. 4:13).
  - b. It is the prelude to the final judgment of the seventh trumpet.
  - c. It is *spiritual*, not natural.
  - d. It is limited to those who do not have God's seal in their foreheads.
  - e. It provides a basis of hope and encouragement for beleaguered Christians.

**I. The Nature of the Plague**

1. Its source: a star fallen from heaven to earth
  - a. Jesus said: “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven*” (Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:9, 13).
  - b. This star is a fallen angel as evidenced by his identification: a *king* whose name is “*Apollyon*” (Greek, “*destroyer*,” v. 11).
  - c. This fallen angel is given authority (“the key”) to the abyss, which he opens in v. 2.
2. The opening of the abyss releases black smoke and locusts (metaphorical, not literal).
  - a. What is the *abyss* (literally, *the deep*)?
  - b. What is the smoke? Smoke is commonly used in Scripture to denote spiritual ignorance and darkness (Joel 2:10; Luke 11:36).
  - c. What are the locusts? The following clues help identify these wicked spiritual beings called locusts.
    - 1) First, from the text we learn that they are/were bound in the abyss. Why? Their king is Satan. Their release pertains to judgment, and their purpose is to cause torment.

- 2) Jesus said, “*Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man*” (Luke 17:26–30).
  - a) “*Marrying and giving in marriage*” refers to something unusual because it provoked the flood.
  - b) Careful analysis of Genesis 6:1-8 shows that fallen angels (watchers) cohabited with human women, producing an offspring of *nephilim* (giants).
  - c) These wicked angels were punished by being locked in Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4–10; Jude 6, 7).
- 3) These fallen angels (watchers) will be released for a brief time to torment unsaved people just prior to the final judgment and appearing of Christ.
  - a) Demons (the disembodied spirits of the *nephilim*) are not bound, roaming freely and seeking bodies to possess.
  - b) This final assault on humans will be their final judgment as well (Psalm 82).

## II. The Nature of the Torment

1. Unlike natural locusts, these are commanded not to hurt earth’s vegetation but those who do not have God’s seal in their foreheads—the unsaved (v. 4).
2. They have power to sting like scorpions, the sting of which *torments* the unsaved, not physically, but mentally and psychologically (v. 5).
3. Their torment is limited by two things: the locusts cannot kill, and they can torture only five months.
4. The afflicted will seek death but not find it. There are three possibilities:
  - a. God will prevent them from dying.
  - b. They will desire to commit suicide, but their fear of death will prevent them from following through.
  - c. Some argue that the fallen angels will teach humans technology that will give them immortality.

## III. The Appearance of the Locusts (vv. 7-10)

The appearance of the locusts is clearly symbolic as seen in the use of “like” eight times. Thus it is not likely that these locusts actually appear as they are described, much of which is taken from mythology. It is also foolish to speculate that John was describing some future war machine.

### Use

1. God uses Satan as His agent of judgment because when he promises pleasure, he always delivers pain.
2. Spiritual darkness is an awful condition (Luke 21:26).
3. The Bible repeatedly warns believers against delusional optimism. We can be tempted to think that sin cannot hurt us and judgment will not come (1 Cor. 6:9–11; Gal. 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:5, 6; 2 Thess. 2:1–3).