**Revelation**

*Lesson 20 – Revelation 9*

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| **First Seal** – White Horse: General Representation of God’s Judgment upon the Wicked | **First Trumpet** – Hail & Fire; 1/3 of the land burned |
| **Second Seal** – Red Horse: War (Lack of Peace) | **Second Trumpet** – Blood; 1/3 of the waters and ships |
| **Third Seal** – Black Horse: Famine & Inflation | **Third Trumpet** – Bitter Water (Wormwood); 1/3 of the rivers and springs |
| **Fourth Seal** - Pale Horse: Death (1/4 of Earth) | **Fourth Trumpet** – Darkness; 1/3 of the heavenly bodies |
| **Fifth Seal** – Souls Under Altar: Praying for God’s Justice against their persecutors | **Fifth Trumpet/First Woe** - |
| **Sixth Seal** – Cosmic Undoing of the World (2nd Coming) | **Sixth Trumpet/Second Woe** - |
| **Seventh Seal** – Silence in Heaven | **Seventh Trumpet/Third Woe** - |

* These last 3 trumpets/woes do not affect those sealed by God. Here we see the first time that God’s judgment is specifically upon the wicked without affecting the saints; just like the plagues in Egypt.

*Verses 1-12:* The Fifth Trumpet/First Woe: Locusts

1. Satan, who is described as a star fallen from heaven (See Luke 10:18), is given a key (a symbol of authority) to the bottomless pit. This could also be translated “abyss.”
2. Here in Revelation 9 the bottomless pit appears to be the abode of the demonic hosts. This is symbolic language saying that this demonic horde has been divinely held back until God decides for them to be released.
3. “When we read that Satan opens the shaft of the abyss, the meaning is that he incites to evil; he fills the world with demons and with their wicked influences and operations.” –William Hendricksen
4. “Smoke” emerges from the abyss when it is opened so that the sun and air are darkened by it (cf. Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; cf. Exod. 10:15; in these texts such darkening is a sign of judgment). Smoke here likely points us to the deception and moral darkness in which most of our world is languishing.
5. Notice the divine passive in verse 1, “was given.” This key to unleash this demonic darkness is received by Satan from God! God’s sovereignty extends even over Satan and his demonic forces.
6. Demonic beings are here portrayed as “locusts” to whom “authority” or “power” “was given”. Here’s the divine passive again. We see it again in v. 4 (“they were told”) and in v. 5 (“they were allowed”). In other words, it is God (or the risen Christ) who has commissioned and authorized them.
7. The literal plague of locusts in Exodus 10:12-15 (eighth) also brought darkness on the land. There we read that “they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt” (v. 15) But here the locusts are commanded not to harm the “grass . . . or any green plant or any tree” (v. 4). They are commanded only to hurt unbelievers, i.e., those who don’t have the seal of God by which one might be protected from such a plague.
8. Verses 7-10 give a terrifying description of what these demonic “locust” hordes look like. John draws upon Joel 1:1-6 and 2:4-5 for this description.



1. There’s so many attempts to make something out of the “5 months” that are mentioned 2 times that it’s best to say only general things: It’s a limited duration set by God Himself and limited in power (can’t kill) but it’s severe as literal locust swarms move on after a few days so it’s an intense and severe judgment.
2. Notice finally that these demonic hordes have a “king” over them “Abaddon” (Hebrew) or “Apollyon” (Greek). There seems to be some militaristic hierarchy among demons even as there is among angels (archangels, seraphim, cherubim, angels). Both of these names mean “Destruction” or “Destroyer.” This is either Satan himself or an evil representative of Satan.
3. “John describes the unseen principalities and powers that operate behind the affairs of this world. Infernal forces and powers are seeking to destroy mankind. Satan and his demons want to destroy every human being. Thus, the warning of the fifth trumpet is simply this: the only alternative to salvation is destruction.” –Joel Beeke

*Verses 13-21:* The Sixth Trumpet/Second Woe:

1. The 6th trumpet is a voice coming from a golden altar saying to the angel to release 4 angels to pester and slaughter on the earth. The fact that this voice comes from the altar may tie this trumpet with the 5 seal which was the cry of souls persecuted because of Christ asking how long until God takes judgment.
2. 1 Kings 1:50-51 – “And Adonijah feared Solomon. So he arose and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. **51**Then it was told Solomon, “Behold, Adonijah fears King Solomon, for behold, he has laid hold of the horns of the altar….” See also 1 Kings 2:28-34 where Joab does the same thing.
3. 4 angels who have been bound at the river Euphrates are commanded to be released for their hour, day, month, and year has arrived. They are given authority to kill 1/3 of mankind. We saw 4 angels standing at the 4 corners of the earth holding back the 4 winds in Revelation 7 so that God’s people could be sealed. They were held back in Revelation 7 and now they are released in Revelation 9. The fact that they have been bound and their horrible description which in some ways parallels the locusts of the 5th trumpet indicates that these are probably demons.
4. These 4 angels appear to be commanders over a horde that John “hears” as numbering 200,000,000 which probably indicates an incredibly large, innumerable group. It’s a massive amount of demonic horde.

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1. There is some question as to whether this is physical death or spiritual/psychological death. Most reformed commentators seem to think that this trumpet represents war in general (not any one specific war) so it would seem to refer to physical death. Elsewhere in Revelation, “fire and sulfur” are descriptions used of the final judgment of unbelievers (14:10; 21:8) and the final judgment of the dragon, beast, and false prophet (20:10) which is both physical and spiritual death.
2. “According to some estimates, between 1480 and 1941, Britain engaged in seventy-eight wars; France, in seventy-one wars; Spain, in sixty-four wars; Russia, in sixty-one wars; Austria, in fifty-two wars; Germany, in twenty-three wars; the United States, in thirteen wars; China, in eleven wars; and Japan, in nine wars.” –Joel Beeke
3. “Martyn Lloyd-Jones said God allowed two world wars in the twentieth century because man thought he had things under his control, so God had to show him what an animal he was and what inhumanity he was capable of. Who would have thought that during the Second World War, six million Jews would be exterminated? And think about what is happening today in Syria and elsewhere. Then consider the murder of unborn children in the wombs of mothers. In the United States alone, we have killed fifty to sixty million babies in the past forty years under sanction of law. With the sixth trumpet, God is warning us: ‘This is what you are like, men and women; this is what you are capable of. When I remove My restraints, this is what happens.’” –Joel Beeke
4. The purpose of both the 5th and 6th trumpets is to warn people to repent. Look at verses 20-21. The “two-thirds” of mankind not afflicted like this do not repent of their ungodly ways but continue their wickedness and sin.

**Message for Us**

1. “The account of the seven trumpets is God’s warning to us of judgment to come. They are not trumpets of doom but of warning… The 5th trumpet warns that those who are not sealed or owned by Christ do not belong to Him. If that is the case for you, you are wide open to demonic forces and influences. The teaching of the Bible is clear: if you do not belong to Christ today, then you must belong to Satan and his demons.” –Joel Beeke
2. Regarding the 5th trumpet: “Perhaps John is describing the horrid realization in the human heart that one’s belief system is false, that one’s philosophy is vain, that one’s values are empty, that one’s destiny is bleak, and thus that one lacks purpose in living, that one is thus helpless and hopeless. People without Jesus are desperate to find meaning and dignity and happiness in any number of ways: complex philosophies, a self-indulgent hedonism, the New Age movement with its endless remedies for what ails the human soul, reincarnation, radical feminism, political agendas, homosexuality, drugs, sexual immorality, materialism, selfism, etc. Demonic “locusts” lead them into such pursuits, all of which are, at the end of the day, empty and lifeless.” –Sam Storms
3. “The general meaning of these trumpets is clear. Throughout this entire period, extending from the first to the second coming, our exalted Lord Jesus Christ will again and again punish the persecutors of the Church by inflicting upon them disasters in every sphere of life, both physical and spiritual.” –William Hendricksen
4. “Are you penitent and believing or impenitent and unbelieving? Every assault of Satan and every war in the world is a warning for you. The destructive forces and massive armies of sin prepare to destroy you. With this, as well as the countless sins that you are accumulating in your life, will you still refuse to repent before God? Let the fifth and sixth trumpets so frighten you that you flee to God and cry out for mercy. God’s judgments will be terrible upon those who refuse to believe; only those whom He seals will escape His judgment. It will be dreadful if God must say of us at the end of our lives that despite all His plagues we did not repent of our idols or acts of hatred, sexual immorality, and greed.” –Joel Beeke