

**Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**  
**Bible Study Notes**  
**6-20-18**

**Revelation 9**

<sup>1</sup> The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. <sup>2</sup> When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. <sup>3</sup> And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. <sup>4</sup> They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. <sup>6</sup> During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them. <sup>7</sup> The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. <sup>8</sup> Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. <sup>9</sup> They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. <sup>10</sup> They had tails with stingers, like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. <sup>11</sup> They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer). <sup>12</sup> The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

**The Fifth Trumpet - Striking by Locusts**

**Verses 1-2:** The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss.

In this case the falling star is actually an angelic being. Satan fits this description best since He was created as the Anointed Cherub, a position of prominence among the angels (Ezekiel 28:14 Isaiah 14:4-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-19 are addressed to earthly rulers, but obviously refer to Satan's own history and work since he controlled the human rulers. Isaiah 14:12 says "How you have fallen from heaven, O

star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!"

The Dragon of Revelation 12 is the Devil, another name for Satan (v.9). He is seen there sweeping away a third of the stars (angels) of heaven, and waging war against God, then being cast out of heaven (vv. 7-9, 12-13). Satan is given the key, presumably from Jesus Christ, who, according to Revelation 1:18 holds the keys of death and Hades. This key to the Abyss might well be one of these keys.

**Verses 3-6: And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.**

9:3-21 Most likely these locusts are demons—evil spirits ruled by Satan who tempt people to sin. They were not created by Satan, because God is the Creator of all; rather, they are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion. God limits what they can do; they can do nothing without his permission. Their main purpose on earth is to prevent, distort, or destroy people's relationship with God. Because they are corrupt and degenerate, their appearance reflects the distortion of their spirits. While it is important to recognize their evil activity so we can stay away from them, we must avoid any curiosity about or involvement with demonic forces or with the occult.

Once the Abyss, or Bottomless Pit is opened, its demonic inhabitants are set loose for the purpose of torturing people. Like locusts, they are numerous and destructive. Like scorpions, they inflict pain. But they are not allowed to kill. Here, as in the whole book of Revelation, God's sovereignty is seen. He sets the limits of what is permitted. (Job 2:6; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Those who have the seal of God on their foreheads cannot be harmed by these demonic mutations. Some take this to mean all believers, since we are sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). However, it probably refers to the 144,000 servants of God from Revelation 7:3 who are marked or sealed on their foreheads before any further plagues were permitted.

The pain inflicted by this judgment is so severe that men who are afflicted would rather die than suffer the continuous torment (five months), but they are not allowed to take the easy course of death. This length of time may be allowed by God to give men the opportunity to repent, though it appears from the last verses of this

chapter that none of them do (Revelation 9:19-20). Those who have hardened their heart against God would probably not even repent in hell itself.

**Verses 7-10: The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.**

They are like horses prepared for battle: descriptive of strength. They seem to have crowns of gold, standing for power and authority, yet limited by God that they may not kill their victims. Human faces imply intelligence. Hair like a woman's hair would be totally unnatural for insect-like monsters and would add to the confusion about their nature. The lion's teeth picture ferocity, breastplates of iron show that they are invincible. Like normal locusts, they have wings. Wings symbolize mobility and speed. Because of their extraordinary powers, their sound in flight is loud and terrifying, like horses and chariots in battle.

**Verses 11-12: They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon. The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.**

Perhaps the most terrifying aspect of this fifth trumpet judgment is that these monstrosities are actually the demons which have been imprisoned in the Abyss (Luke 8:31; Jude 6). They have a leader of their fallen ranks, named Abaddon, or "Destroyer." This is a Hebrew word which is used in connection with hell, and normally refers to it as the place of destruction (Job 26:6; Proverbs 15:11; 27:20). It occurs only here as the name of a person. Apollyon is the exact Greek equivalent of the same name. This name is found only here.

### **The Sixth Trumpet - Slaying of One-third of the Population**

<sup>13</sup> The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. <sup>14</sup> It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." <sup>15</sup> And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. <sup>16</sup> The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. <sup>17</sup> The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads

of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. <sup>18</sup> A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury. <sup>20</sup> The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. <sup>21</sup> Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

The Sixth Trumpet is also the Second Woe. It is a judgment of terrible magnitude. It begins with the release of four evil angels (demons) from the area of the Euphrates River, the approximate location of the early evil empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Assyria. They are allowed to kill a third of the people on the Earth. They accomplish this is by mobilizing a force of 200 million soldiers. It is only in recent times that it would be conceivable to raise an army of that size. Today China has that many people who could serve as soldiers.

Each of these 200 million troops has equipment resembling modern weaponry, with fire, smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. They employ horses, symbolic of modern tanks, with "tails" able to inflict injury.

Even after all the agony and death inflicted by these judgments, the survivors are not willing to repent or to stop worshipping demons and idols. There is a process of hardening one's heart. It is illustrated in the case of Pharaoh during the days of Moses. He hardened His heart repeatedly. As a result, God actually hardened it more (Exodus 8:19, 32; 9:12,34; 10:1).

**9:20-21** These people were so hard-hearted that even plagues did not drive them to God. People don't usually fall into immorality and evil suddenly—they slip into it a little bit at a time until, hardly realizing what has happened, they are irrevocably mired in their wicked ways. Any person who allows sin to take root in his or her life will end up in this predicament. Temptation entertained today becomes sin tomorrow, a habit the next day, then death and separation from God forever (see James 1:15). To think you could never become this evil is the first step toward a hard heart. Acknowledge your need to confess your sin before God.