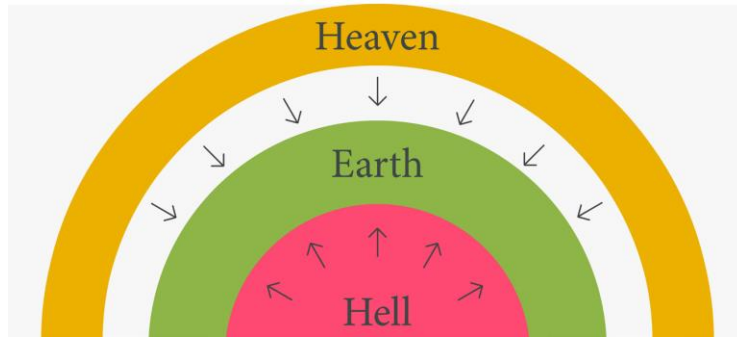


Revelation 8:12-9:21 – Trumpet Judgments And Two Witnesses

Mark Hitchcock writes, *“During the tribulation the earth will be caught in the cross fires of judgment: the wrath of man on earth, the wrath of God from above, and the wrath of Satan from beneath.”*

** We need to remember that even in this God is still in control of what is happening on the earth.



Rev. 8:12-13: *“The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night...”*

- Some type of eclipse occurs, where one-third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened.
- Vs. 13 tells us that things are about to get worse. The angel flying through heaven says with a loud voice “woe, woe, woe”, an interjection of grief or denunciation.
- Some see the sun, moon, stars, etc. as representing governmental powers and may represent the judgment of God upon world rulers (Mt. 24:22). I see this as what it says it is – an eclipse that causes darkness.
- Darkness often leads to fear.

Rev. 9:1-12: *“And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit. He opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great...”*

- The length of the explanation of this trumpet seems to indicate its place in the increasing judgments of God.
- The “star” in vs. 1 could be an angel sent by God with the key to the abyss, a fallen angel, or our spiritual enemy. Note that the key is given to them, they do not have total power.
- The “bottomless pit” (vss. 1-2) (the abyss) is found 9x in the NT and is connected with one or two exceptions to fallen angels, those who rebelled against God (Lk. 8:31; Rev. 9:11). Some believe it is a holding tank for the worst of the worse of the angels that rebelled against God.

- I think smoke will be seen whenever this pit is opened.
- In vs. 3 we read of locusts coming out of the bottomless pit. But these are not ordinary locusts. They were given power “like” scorpions.
- The power of these locusts is limited. Note vs. 3. God is still in control.
- In vss. 4-6 it tells us that they do not harm the vegetation which most locusts would eat. Only those without the seal of God on their forehead (144,000 Jews) are they to torment for five months and their sting will be like that of a scorpion.
- People will want to die from the pain of the sting and cannot (vss. 5-6). God will not allow anyone to die from this judgment.
- Vss. 7-10 tell us the appearance of these creatures. Note the word “like” as John is describing what he sees, things that we could say seem indescribable. We need to be careful to not read our modern-day military equipment into this description. These are living creatures that are not typical of locusts.
- Vs. 12 tells us this is the first “woe.” Two more are yet to come.
- What or who are these locusts?

A) Some believe these are demons who appear in the form of locusts.

B) Some believe they are a horrible type of insect unknown to us. Some people wonder if they will be visible, and I think they will be. The text does not say.

C) These locusts have a king (vs. 11) whose name means “destroyer.” This is some fallen angel. Our spiritual enemy does not go to the abyss until Rev. 20 where he is locked away for 1,000 years.

Chuck Swindoll, in his commentary on Revelation, says about these creatures,

“Clearly, the “locusts” are spiritual, demonic creatures—not earthly members of the insect kingdom, but supernatural soldiers in the kingdom of darkness. John’s symbolic descriptions were meant to communicate ferocity, aggression, power, and intelligence. In fact, John also mentions that this army of wicked spirits will be led by a “king” (9:11). John identifies him by title and name: “the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon” (9:11; emphasis added). Both of these words mean “destroyer.”...So who is this “angel of the abyss”? We can’t be dogmatic, but he’s probably a high-ranking lieutenant of Satan who will do his dark lord’s bidding.”

Rev. 9:13-19: *“Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, “Release the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates...”*

- Keep in mind that the city of Babylon was on the Euphrates and Babylon will play a role in Revelation.
- Vs.14 tells us about these four angels that were to be “released.” They had been “bound.” 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 speaks of fallen, bound angels. There is no evidence in Scripture that any good angels are ever bound.

- When they are released (vs. 15), they kill a third of mankind and are connected to the army we are about to meet. After this judgment, half the world's population will be destroyed.
- These angels may be behind the nations of the world who oppose God but again, God is in control (vs. 15). Nothing happens without His allowing it to.
- The army numbers 200 million (vs. 16). China has claimed to be able to have an army that size if needed. This army is different than the one in Rev. 16:12.
- Some see this army as fallen angels or men possessed by fallen angels. Some do not see the numbers as literal. I think the numbers are literal.
- It could be a literal army. This total is the armies of the four fallen angels who were released if it is a literal army or a supernatural army.
- It could be that these four angels are behind this army of mankind that is released to destroy and kill and possibly using supernatural means.
- In vss. 17-19 the focus is on the horses, not the number of individuals. Note the description of the riders (vs. 17) and the horses.
- Whether symbolic or literal, the picture of what these creatures do is devastating.

Chuck Swindoll writes, *“These demons may inflict their plagues directly and supernaturally, or they may use earthly means to do so. They may inspire the military divisions of certain nations. We can’t be absolutely certain about the meaning of these visions. Yet the big picture remains clear: As the Tribulation proceeds, the judgments will increase in severity.”*

- Some think that because fire, brimstone, and smoke are associated with hell four times in Revelation (Rev. 14:10-11; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8) that these are an army of fallen angels.
- Whether a literal army or not the death toll and the response of the people tell us plenty of the destruction that is brought by this sixth trumpet.

Practical Application:

- We are locked in a spiritual battle against an enemy who wants the destruction of us and humanity. The enemy is powerful but limited by God in what they can do.
- We need to be thankful for the salvation that God has provided and to be proactive in offering people the hope Christ gives.
- The consequences of sin are horrible. Even for believers, when we sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). For the unsaved world that has rejected God, the majority will continue to sin against the Lord in the tribulation period.