

Lesson Twelve

Trumpet Judgments Five & Six (9:1-21)

The first four trumpet judgments are natural calamities that fall on nature. Trumpet judgments five and six fall directly on man. Judgment five brings torment and judgment six brings death.

Trumpet Five: Locusts from the Bottomless Pit (9:1-12)

A plague of locusts reminds us of the eighth plague of Moses (Exodus 10:1-20). However, the locusts here are not literal locusts as in Egypt. This judgment describes demon locusts coming from the abyss to torture man.

9:1. John sees a star fall to the earth. This star appears to be an angel. He opens the bottomless pit. Keys symbolize authority. God gives this star authority to open the bottomless pit. The abyss is the abode of the anti-Christ before he appears (Revelation 11:7). It is also the place where Satan is bound for 1000 years during the Millennium (Revelation 20:3).

9:2. Demons come from the abyss to dwell on the earth and sky. Smoke arising from the abyss represents fire and burning. Jesus described hell as a furnace of fire (Matthew 13:42, 50). Demons ascend through a shaft.

9:3. Mankind is inflicted with torturous pain from the demon locusts. While we are not told the manner of pain, it may suggest emotional, spiritual, and physical pain.

9:4-6. Locusts normally invade and destroy vegetation. These demon locusts are told not to destroy the earth's vegetation but to torture mankind. They could only inflict "the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads." The people of God will experience the fierce persecution of the Beast but not the judgments of God's wrath. This period lasts for only a short time. People desire relief and prefer to die than to live. This reminds us of the severity of the pain caused by the demon locusts.

9:7-11. The army of locusts has a leader. If a person would look at a locust and try to make a monster from it, it would be just like that which John pictured. The head of a locust looks somewhat similar to the head of a horse. Its chest looks like lion's teeth. Its body looks like a scorpion. Its antennae look like long hair. Its scales can have the appearance of an iron breastplate. Its wings make an incredible ferocious sound. These descriptors emphasize the horrific and evil nature of the demonic locusts. The number of these demonic locusts is so great they appear like an army. On their head appears to be something like a crown; this suggests they are successful at their mission. Their faces are like "faces of a man." This may suggest intelligence. Their leader is Abaddon or Apollyon. Abaddon is Hebrew

meaning “destruction.” Apollyon is Greek meaning “destroyer.” This appears to be a chief demon. There is no other reference to him in Scripture.

Some commentators interpret the demonic locusts are modern military helicopters. There are several reasons this is unlikely.

1. Warfare on earth is described in the next woe.
2. The judgment does not harm vegetation and only brings torment to humans, not death (9:4-5). This is highly unlikely in physical warfare.
3. These demon locusts cannot inflict people with the seal of God on their foreheads; this is an unlikely possibility if actual flying vessels are referenced.
4. All other monster beasts in Revelation are symbolic in nature. It is most consistent to interpret this like all other monster beasts.

9:12. John announces that this is only the first of three woes. Two more are coming.

Trumpet Six: 200 Million Horsemen from the East (9:13-21)

Revelation describes a literal, physical battle on earth. This is capitulated in chapter 19 where the word Armageddon is used. The Euphrates marked the eastern boarder of the Roman Empire.

9:13. In 8:3 the altar of incense represented the prayers of the saints. The time has come for God to answer their prayers.

9:14-15. Four bound angels are released at the corners of the Euphrates. God has specifically prepared these bound evil angels for this time. Our God controls world history. One-third of mankind will be killed.

Immediately across the Euphrates in John's day were the Parthians. In much of biblical history it was Assyria. This is the location of modern day Iran.

9:16. John's attention turns to the large number of horsemen. He cannot count them but he hears the number. There are 200 million.

9:17. John did not see normal horse and riders. He described them with fiery red, smoky blue and sulfurous yellow colors. John describes their destructiveness in typical apocalyptic imagery.

9:18-19. John adds to this imagery by stating their deadly weapons come from their mouths and tails. They attack from the front and the rear. From their mouths come fire, smoke, and brimstone. From their tails come weapons like serpents, although John does not describe the way they inflict their poison. One-third of mankind is killed. Based on today's world population, this would be in excess of 2.2 billion people. What begins as a Middle Eastern war erupts into a world war.

9:20-21. Instead of the fierce judgments leading man to call out to God in repentance, they chose to continue their idolatry. Unbelievers continue to worship demons and idols. Unbelievers also continued in their immorality. John identifies four sins – murder, sorceries (plural for all types of spiritualism), immorality (sexual sins), and thefts.