

Revelation 9 – The Trumpet Judgments – continued

By Holly Effiom

VV1-3 The fifth trumpet sounds

- What happened when the fifth trumpet sounded?
- Where is the bottomless pit?
- Who has the key to the bottomless pit?
- What happened when the bottomless pit was opened?
- What came out of the bottomless pit?
- Were the locusts sent forth to eat the premature food?
- How were the locusts empowered?
- In what way are the scorpions of the earth empowered?

LESSON: I wonder about these stars that fall to earth. Are they part of the stars that are defeated in heaven and cast into earth, spoken of in Rev 12? It seems from this passage that these angels are sent to the earth to perform God's destructive bidding. Whatever the answer, we know that all creatures exist to do God's will – I guess it would be up to the individual as to whether it will be for good or ill.

VV4-5

- How are these locusts from the bottomless pit different from the locusts we know and understand?
- How do locusts behave?
- Were these locusts sent to kill men?
- Which men are doomed to this torment? Is it *everyone*?
- Will you and I be tormented by the locusts? Why or why not?
- Rev 7:3-8 speaks of only Jews that were being sealed. So, how do you know that you will not be one of those tormented by these locusts?

LESSON: The only other information given, so far in Revelation, about people being sealed was in chapter 7, and this was in relation to Jews – those who are in “covenant” with God. And, the 144,000 who were sealed, and these are they who kept the commandments of God (Rev 7:3). So, we learn in this section of Revelation that these “locusts” will be sent specifically to attack Jews who are not of the 144,000 – those who did not keep the commandments of God.

This might make some Christians ask, “Will we suffer the attacks of these locusts?” Eph 1:13 Those who have the testimony of Jesus Christ are of a different path – we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

We have discussed “estates” before in the context of angels leaving their own “estate” and invading the “estate” of man, as discussed in Gen 6:1-4 and noted in Jude 6. We cannot point to the parameters of the angels' estate, but we know that the estate of angels is separate and different from that of mankind's.

Peering into mankind's “estate”, we do know that there is further division based upon the “agreement” that a people-group might have with God Almighty. The only “agreement” with a people-group that I know about is that found in the first 5 books of the Bible. There may be other “agreements” but this is the only one that I know of, intimately.

So, God, in His infinite grace and mercy, wanting to be known by and bless *all* people-groups, not just the one with whom He was in covenant, chose to use the existing agreement as a vehicle to accomplish His desired end – to produce a Child, Who is the perfect fulfillment of the Law, Who not only inherits the blessings of the aforementioned “agreement” (the earth) but has a heart to want to share His blessings with all people-groups, and with Whom He can confirm an even more extravagant “agreement” – to give His Child the heavens also as an inheritance.

So, there is a division among mankind, not based upon skin color or the texture of one's hair, but whether or not we are related to God under the first agreement – keeping the commandments of God – or the second – having the testimony of Jesus Christ. Is it possible that a similar division might exist within the angels' estate?

Revelation 9 – The Trumpet Judgments – continued

By Holly Effiom

V6

Why will men desire to die?

LESSON: Job, in the midst of his deep pain, asks the question “Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for his treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad, when they can find the grave?” Job 3:20-22

God foretells the day that the back-slidden Jew will long for death rather than life in Jer 8:3-12. And, that day had indeed come and maybe still is for some. And that word for the Jew, given by Jeremiah is also a prophecy for the church age, telling of how a back-slidden mankind will suffer during the end-times, such that death will be preferable to life because the torment will be so great upon them.

VV 7-10

What did the locusts look like?

When John says “crowns” here is he describing the power given to the locusts? Or, is he describing a literal crown?

What wings would sound like many chariots?

What do these locusts have in their tails?

Who has to worry about these locusts?

VV11-12

What does it mean that there is a king over the locusts?

Is this king of the bottomless pit a human?

What is the name of this king?

How is this trumpet related to the 3 woes pronounced in Rev 8:13?

What does this tell us about the “woes”?

How are the “woes” different to the consequences of the trumpet sounds? [similar to birth pangs?

While there’s pain from the mere mechanics of pushing a child through a small opening, the pain is made more acute, or is intensified, by the body’s natural desire to rid itself of a foreign entity.]

How many more “woes” are to come?

LESSON: It’s such a small section of scripture that is given to this king, as if God will not give him an inch more credit than he deserves. Jesus grudgingly mentions him in John 14:30 (Dan 9:26), not wanting to associate Himself with him at all. Paul wrote about him in Eph 2:2, sharing a little more information. And, I have trouble even writing his name with a capital letter. Notice that these locusts and he who is king over them were not permitted to kill men – the job given them by God is to torment the men without seal for 5 months.

John, here in chapter 9, introduces us to the bottomless pit for the first time, and he explains that there is a “king” of this bottomless pit, which is actually an “angel”. The creatures, “locusts”, made this angel their king – they chose to be demons – and God gave them the job of tormenting the men who weren’t sealed in their foreheads.

What can we understand, knowing that this “king” is actually an angel?

1. An angel has an estate, and that estate includes being in service in the One True kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, with God, in all His fullness, as King. An angel cannot be king. For John to write that this king is actually an angel means that that angel is in rebellion to the order – he *surely* is not serving God. John even provides us the name of this angel, “Destroyer” because his rebellion will end in destruction for himself, and for those who choose to follow him. So, even in rebellion, these angels are fulfilling the purposes of God.

Revelation 9 – The Trumpet Judgments – continued

By Holly Effiom

2. God created man, in the earth, in His own image, hence man's "estate" includes being king in his domain – *dominion*. Only a man can have dominion in the earth. It is the blood of the woman, Mary, Jesus's mother, that gives Jesus *title to the earth*.
3. From our study of Daniel, we learn how kings are made. They arise from among the struggle of the sea of humanity, conquering their fellow human, even though they have the heart of a man and stand like a man. This means that a king is just like any other man in attitude and abilities – any man has the opportunity to be king; he or she needn't be divine, but must be willing to contend for the position. All kings epitomize the beings they serve, over whom they rule – they are the physical manifestation of the spiritual attitudes and aspirations of the people he or she rules. So, any action a king takes is interpreted as being the will of the people he or she rules – hence the synonymous use of king and kingdom in Daniel.

Where is the bottomless pit? Is it somewhere in the sky? No, according to this section of scripture, it is in the earth. What was the explicit instruction in the scripture to the locusts and this "king"? They were supposed to torment the men on the earth who do not have seals in their foreheads.

So, who is *actually* killing men in the earth, at least, since 34 AD (or CE)?

VV13-19

What happened when the 6th angel sounded his trumpet?

What does it mean that the angels bound in the great river Euphrates had been "prepared"?

Prepared for what? Prepared by whom?

Is it possible that the angel of the bottomless pit was "prepared" in the same manner?

Is it possible that our own experiences are actually "preparation" for something, for what God will be doing at some point?

Are the 4 angels bound in the Euphrates the four horsemen described?

What was the job that the 4 horsemen?

How is this different from the job given to the locusts and the angel of the bottomless pit?

How many people will be killed by these ones?

What was the size of the army these angels raised?

Were these soldiers on foot?

What did these horsemen look like?

What instruments did they use to kill a third of all mankind?

Why is it significant to know that fire, smoke, and brimstone issued from their mouths?

What does it mean to die by fire?

Is it possible to die by smoke?

Is it possible to die by brimstone?

Was it their words that killed? Or, are these actually weapons being described?

How were the tails of the horsemen similar to those of the locusts?

LESSON: This chapter, to me, is particularly terrifying. It's not that bad things happen in the prior chapter – we have seen the trees and grasses burn up from fire and drought; we have seen our oceans poisoned and polluted, killing the wildlife within them; we have seen the use of an atomic bomb on cities, and nuclear meltdowns, such as Chernobyl (Wormwood) and Fukushima, and the emission of nuclear waste into the air and into the rivers and lakes – but we have seen bad things happen before and life continued on. Maybe somewhere someone is counting the number of deaths as a result, but life as a whole has gone on. But this Revelation 9, is terrifying because we are seeing God's ire being directed toward men and this will be manifested in men fighting and killing one another. We've not seen God act this way towards us before. We have viewed God through what we know about Jesus – pure love.

Revelation 9 – The Trumpet Judgments – continued

By Holly Effiom

It is important to understand that in these trumpet judgments, the angels that are falling to the earth, are doing the bidding of God Almighty, just as the angel that released the 4 angels, horsemen, bound in the Euphrates, who encouraged an army of two hundred thousand-thousand from the East to march westward to battle, to kill one-third of the men on the earth.

While these 4 horsemen don't kill men directly, I believe they use their mouths to stir up wicked leaders to make war on their fellow man. They will attack some with their words directly (fire), killing them, and others will be collateral damage (smoke), killed by the fall-out from the initial attack, and still others will be infected (brimstone) by the disease of the initial attack – it might take a little while, but they will die, eventually.

These horsemen will use their mouths (Dan 7:8?) and their tails to leave a trail pain and destruction in their wake, using the tool of that 2,000,000 man army.

VV20-21

What are there men that will survive these plagues?

How will the survivors respond to what's happened to them?

What do these verses teach us about God's purpose in inflicting the trumpet judgments?

What do we learn about the character of the survivors?

What do we learn about the character of the angel of the bottomless pit?

LESSON: What is God's purpose in punishment? Jer 3:3; 5:3, 6

We started the study of this section of scripture, of Jesus beginning to rule, with a look at the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. And, we described these judgments as part of the process of separation of the tares from the wheat; and, we agreed that God has chosen to use adversity as the tool of separation, i.e., adversity makes the tares, who have hitherto hid among the wheat, reveal their true nature; but it also reveals the *wheat* in the process. So, how specifically are God's purposes accomplished in the suffering of the wheat?

Jeremiah 5:3 gives us a view of God's goal in meting out punishment. "...thou has stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return."

When God spans us, the appropriate response is to grieve over our sin. When He whips up the natural disasters – the black sand storms of the 1930s – causing much death and destruction, the appropriate response is to repent and change our behavior. When you offend God, the appropriate response is to apologize and go in the way He wants us to go. The children of Israel did not make the appropriate response, as testified by the prophets; neither will man make the appropriate response because they refuse to take a lesson from the Parable of the children of Israel, as testified here by John in Rev 9, in which these men make themselves absolute lovers of themselves and their own wicked ways.

This speaks volumes about the character satan, the "king" of the bottomless pit.