

Revelation 9:1-12 | The Fifth Trumpet

Introduction

Last week we looked at the first four trumpet judgments (which are themselves part of the 7th seal – everything emerges from the broken/opened seals which reveal God’s plan for the future of the world). The first four trumpet judgments were ecological disasters. Now, we turn our attention to the fifth trumpet (one of two events demonic in nature).

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verse 1

- The “star” is most likely a reference to Satan himself. Satan routinely has an audience with God as the accuser of the saints (see Job 1:6; 2:1; Zechariah 3:1-2; & Revelation 12:10).
- The “key” given to Satan is a *delegated authority* granted him by God (the divine passive voice in Greek), who retains Satan under His sovereign control. Martin Luther: “Even the Devil is God’s Devil.”
- The “bottomless pit” or “abyss” (some translations) is mentioned 9 times in the New Testament with 7 of them in Revelation (9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3; Luke 8:31; Romans 10:7).
- 1 Peter 3:19-20; 2 Peter 2:4; and Jude 6 indicate this is a prison-type holding place for the most vile and wicked fallen angels.

Verse 2

- When this demonic horde is released, it will be physically manifest in further darkening the sky due to the smokey haze released when they emerge from the abyss. The cosmic luminaries have already been darkened by one-third in the fourth trumpet (8:12).

Verse 3

- John MacArthur: “These are not normal locusts . . . but specially prepared ones that are merely the outward form of demons, who, like locusts, will bring swarming desolation.”

Verse 4

- The demonic horde of locusts were given specific boundaries to their destruction: they were allowed to afflict only unrepentant humans.
- Those with the seal of God are the 144,000 and their converts.

Verse 5

- The devastation wreaked by these demons was limited: *only wicked people, only for 5 months, and not to the death*. God always sets boundaries on what Satan can do.

Verse 6

- The suffering inflicted by the demonic locust horde will be so intense that people will long to die, but God will not permit them to.

Verses 7-10

- These verses open up the possibility of alternate interpretations regarding the nature of the demonic locust horde. Three possibilities:
 1. *Literal, but supernatural locusts of demonic origin and nature;*
 2. *A demonically empowered military force symbolized by human-looking locusts (note the military/battle language John uses to describe the locusts);*
 3. *Demonic physical and psychological torture symbolized by stinging locusts that drives people to the point of unsuccessful suicide.*

Verse 11

- Abaddon (Hebrew) means *Destruction* and Apollyon (Greek) means *Destroyer*.
- Possibly a reference to Satan or, more likely, a high-ranking demonic entity released from the abyss.

Verse 12

- ¹² *The first disaster is now past, but I see two more approaching.* (J.B. Phillips Translation). Immediate relief followed by even more dread of what is to come.

John MacArthur:

“So intense will be the torment inflicted on unbelievers that in those days (the five months of v. 5) men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them. All hope is gone; there will be no tomorrow.

The earth people have loved and worshiped will have been utterly devastated, the land ravaged by earthquakes, fires, and volcanoes, the sea filled with the putrefying bodies of billions of dead creatures, much of the fresh water supply turned into bitter poison, the atmosphere polluted with gases and showers of heavenly debris.

Then, worst of all, will come foul smoke from the pit of hell as the demons are released to spiritually and physically torment wicked people. The dream of a worldwide utopia under the leadership of Antichrist (the beast of 13:1ff.) will have died. Driven mad by the filth and vileness of the demon infestation, people will seek relief in death—only to find that death has taken a holiday.

There will be no escape from the agony inflicted by the demons, no escape from divine judgment. All attempts at suicide, whether by gunshot, poison, drowning or leaping from buildings will fail.”¹

BIG TAKEAWAY: (Danny Akin) “IN CARRYING OUT JUDGMENT ON UNREPENTANT HUMANITY, THE SOVEREIGN LORD WILL USE SATAN AND HIS FORCES, BUT HE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN IN CONTROL OVER THEM.”²

¹ John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 261-62.

² Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 178.